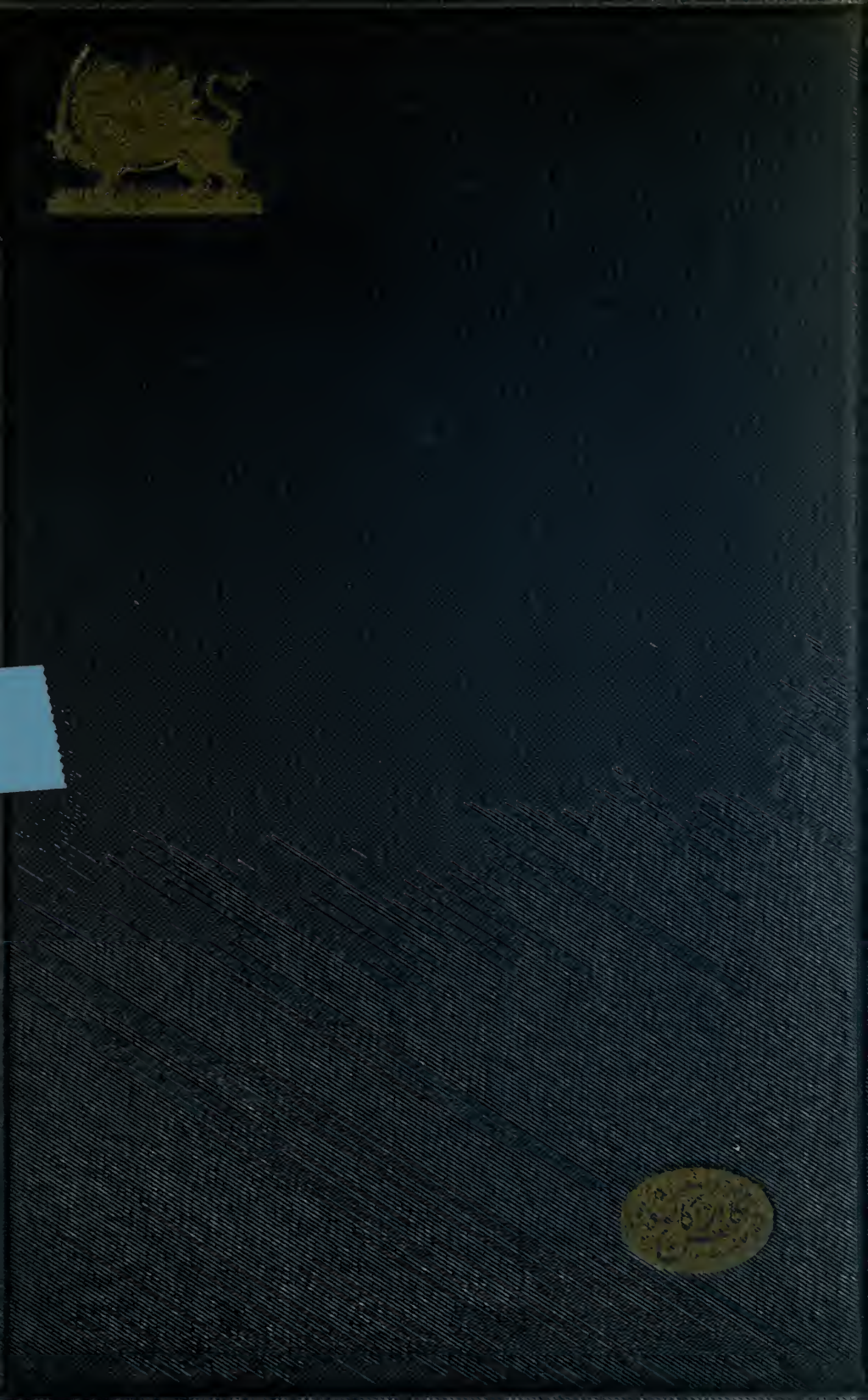


LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/marybirdinpersia00riceiala

MARY BIRD, THE FRIEND OF PERSIANS
(From a sketch by the late Mrs. H. White)

MARY BIRD IN PERSIA

BY

CLARA C. RICE

WITH A FOREWORD BY THE

RIGHT REV. C. H. STILEMAN, D.D.,

LATE BISHOP IN PERSIA

The Lady Mary walks abroad
In that enchanted land

London

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.

1916

"We would know the world—not to censure, not to boast ourselves, but that sympathy may be wider and wider."

FOREWORD

ALL who had the privilege of knowing Mary Bird intimately, and of being her fellow workers in the great cause of foreign Missions, will rejoice that this memoir is being given to the public.

The story of her life and labours can hardly fail to be an inspiration to those who read it. One could not see much of her without realizing the Presence of the Master to Whose service all her time and her talents were consecrated.

And now that she has gone to be with Him in a higher sphere of service, it is well that this book should go forth on its mission as a call to others to follow the King with the same whole-hearted devotion with which she followed Him. It would have been a loss to the Church of Christ if no such record had been written. Not indeed that it would be possible or desirable for many workers, either at home or abroad, to attempt to mould their lives upon hers in detail. Few, if any, could with advantage follow her example in ignoring the claims of the body to a reasonable measure of recreation, food, and sleep. It was a marvel to those who watched her self-denying labours that she lived so long. But, by

God's grace, all may seek to be equally whole-hearted in His service, always on duty, instant in season, out of season, having no object in life but to be well-pleasing in His sight, and to fulfil His will.

Mrs. Rice—who has herself laboured for many years in Persia—has drawn for us a very helpful picture of Mary Bird as a pioneer, as a medical worker, as a teacher, as a friend and an inspiration to her fellow-workers, and as a faithful soldier and servant of Christ. She has done well to complete the picture by showing that in each capacity Miss Bird was above all the loving and sympathizing "Friend of the Persians," with a great understanding of the avenues of approach to both rich and poor, loving them all, and winning their confidence and love, with the one aim and object of drawing them to the Saviour of the world.

This book shows us what one noble-hearted woman was enabled to accomplish for God's glory by her life of prayer, service, and sacrifice. It is not too much to expect that those who read it will, by His grace, seek to do their utmost in the great cause for which she gladly gave her life.

CHARLES H. STILEMAN
(Bishop).

Wimbledon,
October, 1915.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE author wishes to acknowledge her great indebtedness to those friends, both in England and in Persia, who have given invaluable help and advice without which this memoir could not have been written.

She feels that some apology is needed for the references to Persian history, religion, and customs, but such seemed necessary in a book which has so many extracts from letters, and so few notes of time or place.

Harpenden,
St. Andrew's-tide, 1915.

TO
MY MOTHER

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	MARY BIRD—HER ANCESTRY, EARLY LIFE, AND PERSONALITY	1
II.	ANCIENT PERSIA	10
III.	MODERN PERSIA	19
IV.	PERSIAN CONDITIONS AND CUSTOMS	41
V.	MARY BIRD AS A PIONEER	58
VI.	"KHÁNUM MARYAM," THE FRIEND OF THE PERSIANS	78
VII.	THE ATTITUDE OF THE PERSIANS TO "KHÁNUM MARYAM"	93
VIII.	MARY BIRD AS A "DOCTOR"	109
IX.	MARY BIRD AS A "TEACHER"	136
X.	MARY BIRD AS A FRIEND AND AN INSPIRATION	160
XI.	"A FAITHFUL SOLDIER AND SERVANT" AT WORK AND AT REST	172
XII.	THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY IN PERSIA	183
	GLOSSARY OF PERSIAN TERMS	195
	INDEX	197

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

MARY BIRD, THE FRIEND OF THE PERSIANS - - - - - *Frontispiece*

GENEALOGICAL TABLE - - - *page* 2

MARY REBECCA STEWART BIRD - *to face p.* 8

MAP OF PERSIA - - - - *page* 20

A BLUE TILED MOSQUE, NEAR SOH *to face p.* 37

ABBASABAD - - - - - ,, ,, 57

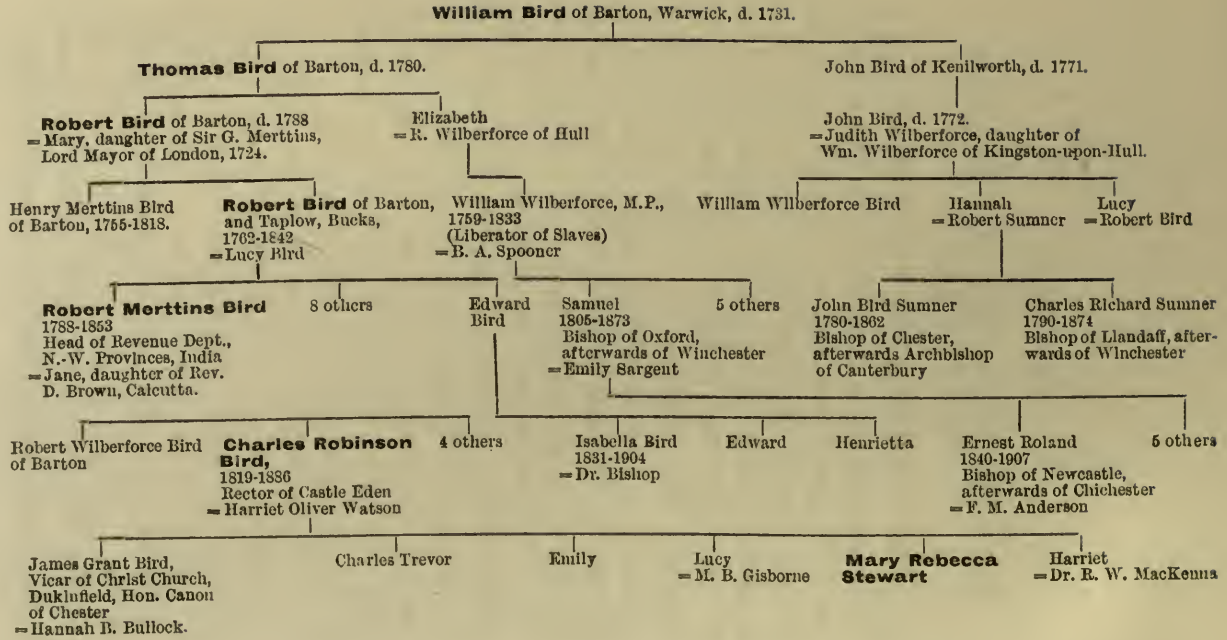
BLUE THISTLES - - - - ,, ,, 181

CHAPTER I

Mary Bird, Her Ancestry, Early Life, and Personality

MARY REBECCA STEWART BIRD was a member of a large and well-known family who have given men and women of note to the Church, to civil and political life, to travel and research, to urge the claims of philanthropy, and to administer the Oversea Dependencies of the Empire. For example, the family was doubly connected with the Wilberforces; Mrs. Bishop, *née* Isabella Bird, one of the most intrepid of women travellers, was a cousin of Mary Bird's father; and, rather farther removed in relationship, were the brother bishops, John Bird Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Charles R. Sumner, Bishop of Winchester. The family tree shows the connexion of these and others with the subject of this memoir. Here, her nearer relatives claim attention.

Her grandfather, Robert Merttins Bird, was the greatest of the administrators of the United Provinces (then the North-West Provinces), India. As head of the Revenue Department, he successfully conducted the survey and land settlement of that territory during the second quarter of the last century. Dr. G. Smith mentions James Thomason, John Lawrence, and William Muir as coming "under


William Bird of Barton, Warwick, d. 1731.
Thomas Bird of Barton, d. 1780.
John Bird of Kenilworth, d. 1771.
Robert Bird of Barton, d. 1788
=Mary, daughter of Sir G. Merttins, Lord Mayor of London, 1724.
Elizabeth
=R. Wilberforce of Hull
John Bird, d. 1772.
=Judith Wilberforce, daughter of Wm. Wilberforce of Kingston-upon-Hull.
Henry Merttins Bird of Barton, 1755-1818.
Robert Bird of Barton, and Taplow, Bucks, 1762-1842
=Lucy Bird
William Wilberforce, M.P., 1759-1833 (Liberator of Slaves)
=B. A. Spooner
William Wilberforce Bird
Hannah
=Robert Sumner
Lucy
=Robert Bird
Robert Merttins Bird
1788-1853
Head of Revenue Dept., N.-W. Provinces, India
=Jane, daughter of Rev. D. Brown, Calcutta.
8 others
Edward Bird
Samuel
1805-1873
Bishop of Oxford, afterwards of Winchester
=Emily Sargent
5 others
John Bird Sumner
1780-1862
Bishop of Chester, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury
Charles Richard Sumner
1790-1874
Bishop of Llandaff, afterwards of Winchester
Robert Wilberforce Bird of Barton
Charles Robinson Bird,
1819-1886
Rector of Castle Eden
=Harriet Oliver Watson
4 others
Isabella Bird
1831-1904
=Dr. Bishop
Edward
Henrietta
Ernest Roland
1840-1907
Bishop of Newcastle, afterwards of Chichester
=F. M. Anderson
5 others
James Grant Bird,
Vicar of Christ Church, Duklnfield, Hon. Canon of Chester
=Hannah B. Bullock.
Charles Trevor
Emily
Lucy
=M. B. Gisborne
Mary Rebecca Stewart
Harriet
=Dr. R. W. MacKenna

the spell of Merttins Bird."[1] Sir Richard Temple says that in his day there was no civil officer to equal him, that he was a born leader of men, and that he and James Thomason "formed the great school of administrators in the North-West Provinces."[2] He retired to England in 1842 a convinced advocate of missionary work in India. His son, the Rev. Charles Robinson Bird, M.A., Oxon, Rector of Castle Eden, Co. Durham, and Rural Dean of Easington, Mary Bird's father, married Harriet O. Watson, daughter of a well-known physician in Bath.

It is difficult to understand the development of character and genius unless we know the root from which it springs. Doubtless much of Mary Bird's strength of mind and of purpose was due to the generations of character and fine exploits of her ancestors. She inherited elements of great value, but the harmony of her life would seem to consist in holding lightly many of them desirable in themselves, and accentuating the one that to her mattered most—her ever-deepening understanding of the need of men, and of the all-sufficiency of the Christ to meet that need. In her we see how an accurate knowledge of one subject, and a carefully nurtured sense of the relativity of that subject to other subjects, implies great self-control and self-development. Life to her was a wonderful, ever moving, ever growing thing, without pauses for

[1] "Twelve Indian Statesmen," p. 75.
[2] "Men and Events of My Time in India," p. 49.

stagnation. She was made for action and she was ready for it, while this capacity for work owed much to her belief in the ultimate realization of her ideal.

Mary Bird began life on 23 June, 1859, at Castle Eden Rectory, Co. Durham, being the fifth child in a family of six. She was physieally small and delicate, and on this account was called " Tiny " by her brothers and sisters, but her nature was a large unselfish one, from which jealousy seemed absent. Even as a child she quickly grasped a situation, defended the absent, and never spoke slightingly of others. She always championed the cause of the oppressed, and her indignant exelamation when a cat was discovered killed in the garden, " Oh ! what a shame to kill a cat," became a family proverb. Though not strong enough to romp and play, she was a merry little soul and ready for any escapade seated on her brother's shoulders !

She was educated at home where, unconsciously, her bright, hopeful nature made her of real use to others and where, as through all her life, her frail body was dominated by the ardour and strength of her soul. Might it not have been said to her

> Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie
> Thy soul's immensity ;
> Thou best philosopher who yet dost keep
> Thy heritage . . .
> . . . Seer blest !
> On whom those truths do rest
> Which we are toiling all our lives to find.

Her mother's loving influence, and the circum-

stances and ideals of her childhood exercised a strong formative influence on her character. As a tiny child of five a missionary, who was her father's guest, took her on his knee and told her stories of African children whose mothers could never tell them of the love of Jesus, because they did not know of it themselves. He asked her if one day she would like to go and tell them. "Yes," she replied, and always after considered herself pledged to this work. Twelve years later at the time of a visit to Castle Eden Rectory of Dr. Farquhar, Staff Surgeon to Lord Lawrence in India, and Dr. Eugene Stock, she reached the starting point of missionary enthusiasm, when personal knowledge of the "Saviour of the world" became a reality, and then she really longed to work among the girls of Africa.

Until her father's death in 1886 she was his constant companion and helper, and was trusted with all his affairs. She worked untiringly among children and factory girls, lastingly influencing many of them. Also both in Castle Eden and York many home duties devolved upon her, and she gained valuable experience for after years. During a time of complex claims of life at home and abroad, she refused an offer of marriage from one for whom she had the greatest affection, as she had already offered to go abroad and was convinced that her life-work lay in some foreign land, then unknown to her, and that a life of comparative ease in England was not for her.

This uncertainty was soon over, for in 1891 she

was asked to go to Persia as a pioneer of women's work. Face to face with this new and unexpected prospect, feeling that some definite training was necessary, she went for a few months to "The Willows," a training college for women workers. This proved rather a difficult time for her as she had been accustomed to work on her own initiative and to do or leave undone many things according to her own inclination. She liked practical work and was always energetic and ready for any secular task, but there was evident disinclination for definitely spiritual work. As the weeks went on she realized her lack of power in God's service, and understanding the difficulty she fearlessly faced it. Help came to her in many ways, chiefly through some Divinity lectures, and one evening she went to the Principal's room and said, "It is all right, I know now what I never knew before—that spiritual work can only be done in the power of the Spirit of God." From that time onwards she was ready for whatever came of spiritual or secular work, and her whole attitude towards the present and the future was one of rest and joy in the confidence which was now her strength. After this the *intense* side of her character was the religious one, but being coupled with the widest tolerance and a glad recognition of all that was true and noble and unselfish whenever she saw it and whatever guise it took, she was not looked upon as a woman with a narrow outlook, or a prejudiced mind. Rather was she recognized as one worth

knowing—with her well-informed mind, level judgment, and breadth of view. Her powers of observation were marvellous, her sense of humour keen, and she was full of amusing stories of what she saw and heard. Though absolutely unfettered in her daily work, whatever it might be, she was conscious of the ties which bound her to society. In her rare moments of leisure she was a charming visitor. She met people with heartiness and natural ease, and not only possessed a ready tongue, but a sympathetic ear. She was keenly critical, but never hurt people by what she said, nor proved her own right by another's wrong. She had one standard of effort for herself and another, less strenuous, for those about her. Difficulties were often stepping-stones; for instance, though naturally frail and timid she made herself an exceptionally good traveller, and might have become famous in that respect if she had devoted her life to travelling instead of to missionary work.

A part of Mary Bird's unfailing charm was that she knew how to choose and wear pretty though simple clothes; she liked to look fresh and always to be suitably dressed. Her face was young and eager looking, full of force and character, yet her personality was much greater than her appearance, her doings much greater than her sayings. She hardly knew the word "impossible," and yet she clearly saw her own limitations. If she ever overestimated possibilities, this was a safer defect than not to be conscious of them. A sense of

fellowship in the joys and sorrows of humanity was hers. She exemplified the truth of the Indian proverb, "I met a hundred men on the way to Delhi, and they were all my brothers." This was not merely the result of imagination and tenderness of feeling; she was really in harmony with the children of men, and walked with them through the low gateways of darkness and sorrow, just as gladly as on the house tops of clear vision and joy. She lived, too, be it reverently said, in harmony with God, and so was able to tell of the secret of peace and of joy to those by whose side she walked along the road of life.

Such was the Mary Bird who gave the best years of her life to Persia and its women. The account of her life and work which follows, will to some extent show the personality of the strong, beloved, great woman, unique in an originality which it is hard to picture in words. One who only knew her during the last two years of her life said, "I know nothing of her teaching, I only saw it through her life."

Reaching Persia in May, 1891, she lived and worked in Julfa and Isfahan for six years, returning to England in 1897 for a much needed rest. As a pleader for the Persians she had few equals. She spoke constantly in England, and also went for a few weeks to Canada, where her stories of the early converts aroused deep interest.[1] She left

[1] See her book, "Persian Women and Their Creed." C.M.S.)

1875

1891

MARY
REBECCA STEWART
BIRD

1898

1911

England again early in 1899 for another five years in Persia, spent in Yezd and Kerman, rather before the end of which she felt it to be her duty and her privilege to take the place at home of her younger sister who had just married.

During the eight years which followed she put her untiring, selfless energy into work in Liverpool, vitalizing and enlarging the missionary outlook. Then in 1911, when her work for her mother was ended, she was ready to go back at the earliest moment at her own charges, to the land she loved, as " a cracked pitcher " she said, but as cheerfully capable as ever, and caring even less for her own comfort. The welcome given to her by every one was remarkable. This, the last chapter of her life, was a short one, for on 16 August, 1914, she passed to her eternal rest. Bishop Stileman, writing at the time, said, " She has been one of the greatest missionaries of her generation."

Though a precious stone may not need a setting, yet such seldom fails to bring out the beauty and the excellence of the jewel which it surrounds. A flower may be seen under varying conditions: alone—when it is appreciated for its own perfection; in a desert—where the very contrast intensifies its life and its beauty; in a garden—where it is a part of a glorious whole. So Mary Bird to be fully appreciated must be seen as a precious stone in her Persian setting, and, as a flower—in her individuality, in the desert life of dust and stones, and in the garden of friendship and fellowship.

CHAPTER II

Ancient Persia

PERSIA seems a large " setting " for one woman ! But the present Persia is so closely linked up with the past that a brief summary of its ancient rulers and its ancient yet still prevailing faiths, will not be out of place. Miss Bird, too, is representative of hundreds of British men and women who, for one reason or another, live and work in this ancient land, which is more closely connected with the West than ever before.

It is claimed that Persian history can be traced back for some six thousand years, during which period the region known, to its own people as Irān, or the Aryan land, and to the West as Persia, has been inhabited by various races and nations, and has come in contact with a large number of foreign Powers. Here it will suffice to recall some of the comparatively modern, outstanding dates and facts, the latter being essential to the clear understanding of the Persia of to-day.

The country and its rulers from the eighth century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. largely affected the then known world. In the seventh century B.C. the Medes of Ecbatana, the ruins of which city still exist, revolted against Assyria, allied themselves with Babylon, and formed an independent

kingdom. This in time was merged into a Medo-Persian kingdom by Cyrus, King of Anshan, who captured Ecbatana in 550 B.C.

No one event in ancient times was so important and central to the Kingdom of God as the surrender of Babylon to Cyrus in 538 B.C.[1] Again, no one figure was so central and so closely related to the restoration of the Hebrews to Palestine, and the preservation of the true faith, as Cyrus, the king of the Persians. The Medes and Persians were never idolaters, no images profaned the severe simplicity of the Iranic temples, and it was only after the lapse of ages and in connexion with foreign worship that idolatry crept in. Monotheism seems to have been a strong bond of sympathy between the Jews and Persians in the time of Darius, and for centuries after. The Jews, usually so intolerant of a foreign yoke, never rebelled against the Persians, who in their turn, in spite of pride of race and place, respected and protected the Jews. This great fact related Persia very closely to the Jews long before the coming of Christ. Her fidelity, though so imperfect, was acknowledged by God; the surrounding nations as foretold have suffered desolation and complete destruction, while Persia, who was not so denounced, is still a nation, retaining not only the Persian stock, but the Israelite colonies planted twenty-five centuries ago in Mesopotamia and Media. Cyrus the Great largely extended the boundaries of Persia, while the fame of its

[1] Dan. v. 28.

warriors[1] and merchants was widespread. Darius Hystaspes made vast improvements in the government and general well-being of the country, and Xerxes, desiring still greater power, attempting in 480 B.C. with his army of over two millions to conquer Greece, met with disaster. At this time the Persian empire covered two and a quarter million square miles.

The next years that claim attention are 334–331 B.C. when Alexander the Great of Macedon made himself master of the Persian empire. The ruins of the Halls of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes at Pasargadæ and Persepolis to-day, bear dumb but eloquent testimony to his powers of annexation and destruction.

At his death, Alexander's empire was divided among his four generals. After this Persia was less prominent for a time, and for some centuries formed part of the Parthian realm until, with the dynasty of the Sásánidæ, a new Persian empire arose under Artaxerxes in A.D. 226, the extent of which was only two-thirds of what it had been in the reign of Darius.

During the rule of this exclusively Persian dynasty, which lasted until A.D. 641, many religious forces were in conflict. The Jews had grown powerful during the time of the Parthians and that of the Seleucidæ, and had their great school of tradition and Talmudic learning in Babylon. The old heathenism still lingered on in Mesopotamia.

[1] Ezek. xxvii. 10 and xxxviii. 5.

Christians were numerous. Tradition says that Thaddæus and Simon the Canaanite preached and taught in Western Persia. The Parthian was tolerant in religious matters, and there was an open door to the eastward. The missionary activity of the Church and the progress of the Gospel under the Parthian rule of the East, was as great as under the Roman rule of Europe during the same centuries.

Dominant over all was the ancient state religion of Zoroastrianism. Under the Sásánian kings, who were purely Persian, this also purely Persian faith was revived with a fierce intolerance seldom equalled in the West. Some of the later Sásánian rulers were favourable to Christianity, but the national tendency was towards the teachings of Zoroaster. Though thousands of Persians became Christians, the stronghold of Zoroastrianism did not yield. An indigenous Persian Church arose, but worshipping in the Syriac language and without the Bible in the vernacular, the nation as a whole was not leavened as might have been the case. Much hindrance was caused by the Jews, who incited the Magi against the Christians. The third century saw peaceful progress, but the fourth was full of conflict and persecution; with "an open door, but many adversaries." During this period pious monks from Egypt and Syria were unceasing in their efforts; many churches in Mesopotamia and among the Nestorians still bear their names. About A.D. 302 under the preaching of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the King of Armenia and his Court

were baptized. The growth of Christianity was very rapid, and Armenia was the first kingdom in which Christianity was adopted as the state religion. Before long both Nestorians and Armenians were under Persian rule. When Christianity was accepted by Constantine in A.D. 312 it was stigmatized by the rival empire of the East as "the religion of the Romans." National sentiment united with religious zeal led to bitter persecution of Christians, which continued for centuries in Persia after its cessation in the Roman empire. The sufferings of the Christians under Shapur II were as terrible as any experienced under Diocletian, and the advance of Christianity met with more obstacles in the East than in the West. In the fifth century the Eastern Christians were separated from the Western through the bitter controversies in the Church. The Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, resulted in a schism which reached Persia; and the final separation of the main body of Persian Christians was completed in A.D. 499. The reasons for this were partly political, as it satisfied the Persian power to know that its subjects had broken their connexion with Rome, and so persecution ceased. In the seventh and eighth centuries the Persian Church was very active in propagating its faith in regions beyond, among the savage hordes inhabiting the deserts to the East, even in China, and to the remotest shores of Asia.

The prominent religion of Persia from primeval days claims some further mention here. The faith

held by the Zoroastrians, fire-worshippers, or Parsis, is supposed to have been inculeated by Zoroaster or Zardusht, a native of Rhages, who afterwards lived in the East of Irán, or Persia, in the region known as Baetria, famous to-day for its camels. His date is unknown. Some Greek writers have suggested five thousand years before the Siege of Troy! Modern scholars vary in plaeing him between 600 and 800 B.C. Zoroaster may have been a leader in a sehism in the old Aryan race, the result of which was that the religion of one braneh of the race developed into Vedism and Hinduism in India, while the other was the origin of the dualistie system, whieh still bears the name of Zoroaster, and which took root in Persia.

Certainly Zoroaster was one of the world's great teaehers, seeing far into things spiritual, yet always longing for more light. Probably the Magi who worshipped at the manger in Bethlehem, were some of his followers. Aeeording to the tenets of the faith he taught, the world is the battlefield of two contending spirits, eternal and creative in their origin and action; the wise God, Ormuzd, and the evil spirit, Ahriman. The confliet is not hopeless, and is not destined to be perpetual. Modern Parsis recognize the existence of vast hierarchies of good and evil spirits. Their sacred books are spoken of eollectively as the Zend-Avesta. The word *zend* means "interpretation," and the *Avesta* is a literature which developed with the life of the people. The eollection of hymns is attributed to Zoroaster

himself. In later ages, much liturgical matter was added, and what may be called the " priestly code " of the fire-worshippers. The light, the sun, the fire, are the symbols of Ormuzd, therefore the sacred fire is always burning in the temples, and when men pray, they face the sun. They now deny the assertion that they worship the fire or the sun, but say that they worship the pure and shining One Whose presence and character are symbolized by light and its sources. Their religion exerts very little influence over the Parsis of the present day, who are practically materialists; they are liberal and public-spirited and not wanting in philanthropy. They have contributed few converts to Christianity, but those, in India especially, are men and women of mark and influence.

In the early centuries of the era, Christianity failed to overthrow Zoroastrianism in Persia, but to this mighty religion which threatened at one time to supersede all others, a fatal blow came suddenly and in an unexpected way. In the middle of the seventh century the Persian Emperor one day received a letter bidding him abjure the faith of his ancestors and confess that " there is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God." The indignant monarch tore the letter to atoms and drove the Arab messenger from his presence. But in less than a decade the Arab hordes had driven the Persian sovereign from his throne, and the whole ancient system had fallen with a crash. Mohammedanism has from that day to this ruled in Persia. The

mobeds of Magiism became the *mullás* of Islám. The Arabian domination continually increased in power and extent. Persia was sometimes a province, at others the centre of the Arabian Empire, under successive rulers of Arab, Turk, or Mongol origin. Mohammedanism completely captured the life and permeated the thought of the people, and Persia became the cradle of Moslem philosophy. The Persian is the only Aryan race that has accepted Islam.

From A.D. 632 to 1258 the Saracens ruled in Persia, during part of which time the Seljuk Turks exercised considerable power. A prominent man among the latter was Omar Khayyám, the mathematician and free-thinking poet of the 11th century.

Though Persia seemed bound by the iron rule of Islam, which knows no change, another wave of conquest, this time from the East, swept over the country in A.D. 1258 when the Mogul Tartars established themselves under Changis Khan as the masters of Irán. This change was for a time favourable to Christianity, as the rulers openly declared themselves as Christians, or as friendly to the faith. An alliance with the Western Church was hoped for: but after a time of vacillation the Moguls found Islám more suited to their rough and sanguinary methods, and the Emperor decided in favour of Mohammedanism. A time of persecution followed, and the Christian faith, instead of holding the fair fields of Central Asia, was left with only a remnant of its adherents. In 1420 the confusion

began to clear, and the national religion underwent a change from the orthodox Sunni faith to the heterodox doctrines of the Shiahs, to which it has adhered ever since.

From 1492 to 1722 the Safavi dynasty was in power; its climax being reached during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, a ruler who did much for his country. Among other things he brought five thousand Armenian families from Julfa in Armenia to the vicinity of Isfahan, then one of the largest and most magnificent cities in the world, and at that time the Persian capital, and gave them land on which to build and settle down, so that they might teach their arts and crafts to the Persians. This settlement they called New Julfa after their home on the Araxes. With the downfall of the Safavi dynasty and the accession of Nadir Shah in A.D. 1736, the last native Persian dynasty passed away. He was a warrior ruler who invaded India in 1739 and entered Delhi. After his death in 1747 a period of anarchy, followed by short reigns of various despots, ensued, until in 1794 Agha Mohammed, the first of the present reigning Turkish dynasty of the Kajars, ascended the throne.

> Think in this batter'd caravanserai
> Whose Doorways are alternate night and day,
> How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
> Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.
>
> OMAR KHAYYÁM.

CHAPTER III

Modern Persia

TO picture Mary Bird's work it is necessary to look at Persia and the Persians as known to her for nearly a quarter of a century. During this time a gradual disintegration of much that formerly stood for Persian thought and attitude has been going on, and the change in the outlook of the people has been marvellous, much greater than in the thousand years preceding it, yet the country itself is almost unchanged.

Looking first at the land of Persia, it is now barely three-quarters of a million square miles in extent (one-third of what the Persian empire was in the days of Xerxes), with the Caspian Sea and Transcaucasia on the north, the Persian Gulf on the south, Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the east, and the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates on the west. The greater part of it consists of a tableland from 2500 to 3000 feet high, encircled by mountain chains on the north, west, and south. Three-quarters of the entire surface is desert land, some of it sandy and much of it salt.

The mountains are many of them magnificent. Mount Demavend is 18,600 feet high, and is always snowcapped on its northern summits. Some ranges are rugged and bare in the extreme, their

sides covered with huge loose boulders, as though giants had been at play. Others may be thought dreary and monotonous; but when once the spirit of the mountains possesses one, they are all attractive in their ever varying brown, red, purple, and yellow colouring, in their height, their jaggedness,

or their symmetry, and rich in unexplored ore, they are typical of much of the untouched riches of Persia. There are large plains, absolutely flat and apparently narrow, but many average sixty miles in width. Some are green in the spring, when they and the hills put on their most attractive guise, and are bedecked with crocuses,

lilies, exquisite blue thistles, and many other flowers called by the natives merely "red flowers" or "white flowers."

To the Persian the desert, or Lút, is inseparably bound up with his character, life, and religion. The appeal of the desert to some Western minds is marvellous, with its vastness, bounded by the horizon, by the everlasting hills, or by a fascinating mirage; with its simplicity and with its silence!

Between the mountain ranges valleys are found, made fertile by mountain torrents, with rocky nooks fringed with maidenhair fern; and cool precipitous defiles connect the plains at different levels. Sometimes at the edge of a plain or the foot of a mountain appears a village with two or three large gardens, forming an oasis. Here rare fruits and flowers, valuable trees and running water make for the native mind a veritable Paradise, and lend truth to the scenes of picturesque beauty celebrated in history, poetry, and song, and indissolubly connected with the land of Persia. The atmosphere in general is remarkable for its dryness and purity. The seasons correspond with those in England, but the summer heat and winter cold are both greater. Except on the shores of the Gulf, or on the borders of the Caspian Sea, the rainfall only averages ten inches; and there are few days in the year when the sun is not shining. It has been said that the birds of Persia have no song, the flowers no scent. It is only necessary to spend twenty-four hours in a garden in Shiraz, "the home of the nightingale and

the rose," and reminiscent of Hafiz, Sadi, or Lala Rukh, to agree with Hafiz, that

> The bulbul at dawn, laments to the East wind ;
> Of the havoc that the rose and its scent made.

Whatever route a traveller takes to Persia his rate of progression lessens as he gets nearer to his destination. The alternatives are, across Europe and the Caspian Sea; by the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, and the Caspian Sea; or by Suez, Bombay, and the Persian Gulf. By the first route the country in normal times can be reached in less than a week, but when once Persian soil is touched troubles and delays begin. In the whole country there are only two very short railway lines, one of four miles to a shrine outside Teheran, and the other only slightly longer in the north-west. Since the Russian occupation of the north some good roads to the capital have been made, but after leaving Teheran, most of the roads are merely tracks across the desert, fifteen or twenty often running side by side, made by the passage of myriads of caravan animals during the course of long ages. Where the roads are level it is possible to drive, keeping the same vehicle but changing horses, usually driven four abreast, every ten miles. In this way sixty or seventy miles a day may be covered. The alternatives are: riding on horses, mules, or donkeys, or on bicycles (which often need to be carried rather than carrying their riders); or in *kajavas*, i.e. wooden panniers, a pair of which, with or without covers, are tied

together and slung over the back of a mule; or in a *tacht-i-ravan* or moving throne, carried on poles with a mule behind and another before, in which the traveller can recline. This last is looked upon as the first-class carriage of Persia, and for it the hire of four mules is charged! Progress, except by carriage, is very slow, twenty or twenty-five miles being considered a good day's or night's journey.

When it is remembered what a road means to the Oriental, it seems strange that the people of a country with such a past should in this twentieth century be still dependent on caravan animals to take themselves or their merchandise along what can be only regarded as desert tracks. The semi-mythical Semirămis in the earlier days of the Babylonian empire built a royal road through Media and called it after herself; after this she did the same for Persia. Herodotus tells us that Darius the Mede built a royal road from Susa to Sardis fifteen hundred miles long, with inns and bridges and guard houses. But where are these roads to-day? To the Oriental mind a road, a way, the king's highway, suggests the idea of a kingdom, planned and controlled by a personal sovereign, and a sure course to one's destination for those who keep to the road. The stricter followers of Mohammed say that "the way" was shown in what their prophet said and did, also in what he sanctioned by his silence. And so in Oriental thought generally, "the way" is the road that has been prepared for those who

would travel aright. May the day soon dawn when both actually and figuratively a "way" may be prepared in Persia for safe and comfortable travel, and may it be that "an highway shall be there, and a way . . . the way of holiness."

The rivers of Persia are mostly short and are sometimes lost in the desert. The bridges over them are often impassable, and the stream must be forded, though this is difficult in the spring when the melting snow of the mountains fills the river beds with rushing torrents. It is more or less a rule in everything in Persia never to repair when damage first occurs, but to leave the destruction to work until the choice lies between leaving a ruin, or rebuilding or remaking.

Persia probably contains eight or nine million inhabitants, half of whom dwell in the villages and are mainly engaged in agriculture. They grow the best wheat in the world, some of it at a height of nine thousand feet, and their crops of cotton, opium, rice, barley, and tobacco are all profitable—two and even three crops being raised on one field in a season. Their orchards, vineyards, and gardens produce fine pears, melons, pomegranates, quinces, peaches, apricots, nectarines, mulberries, plums, and cherries, and grapes and oranges of many kinds. A fourth of the inhabitants dwell in the cities and are engaged in the study or profession of philosophy, theology, or poetry. Some are large landowners, scions of the royal house, hangers-on at the Court or the houses

of the great. Others are merchants, shop-keepers, weavers, potters, workers in silver, copper, brass, and leather, or labourers.

The rest of the population belong to the "Ilyats," or wandering tribes, tent dwellers possessing large flocks and herds, who spend the spring and summer on the mountain slopes, and winter on the plains. These tribes are chiefly of Arab, Turkish, and Persian extraction, and the leading ones are known as Bakhtiaris, Lurs, Kashgais, Kurds, Afsháris, Baluchis, and Gypsies. Though each has its distinctive features, the Bakhtiari, a large and prominent tribe at the present day, may be singled out for special notice and regarded as representative of them all. The Bakhtiaris are a most interesting nomadic people, inhabiting a mountainous part of Persia, and possess a dialect of their own. They differ considerably in temperament from the town dwellers, being very warlike, and often quarrelling amongst themselves. They are ruled by the Il-Khani, whose kingdom stretches over a hundred miles of Persia and the whole of Persian Arabia. In many respects the Bakhtiari resembles the Highlander in the days of Rob Roy; he is open-handed, a good friend but a bad enemy, and has somewhat hazy ideas as to the rights of property. Every man is a born horseman, and also an excellent shot even when firing at full gallop.

In the winter, all the chiefs (or Kháns, as they are called) migrate to Shuster (the ancient Susa), and stay in that city until the spring. Miss Bird

was once asked to visit the wife of a chief. She described her visit thus :—

"The good lady is large all ways—length, breadth, and thickness—she has handsome pearl and gold nose stud and earrings, massive gold and turquoise bracelets and neck ornaments, and is very well tattooed, espceially round the knees and ankles. She has rhcumatie gout in most joints, which I fear will be bad to cure. Cousin Isabclla (Mrs. Bishop) once stayed a night with them, and they asked most affectionately after her, saying: 'A good lady, kind-hearted, not selfish, would give medicine to the poor, and touch their wounds. Give her our salaams, tell her we do not forget her.' Then to me, 'If we love we love always ; if we hate we hate always, we never forget.' Their women are said to be very moral, as they shoot immoral women! But polygamy is the custom. This chief's son has fourteen wives already, and he is a young man."

When there is illness in the houscholds of the chiefs the doctor in charge of thc C.M.S. Isfahan hospital is sent for, all the expenses of the journey being paid and a handsome fee given, besides many presents. They are very lax Mohammedans, and the Kháns generally have but small liking for the mullás. They want an English missionary doctor to live amongst them, being quite willing to guarantee a hospital, and if neccssary, give the full salary of the doctor. A great sphere of work is opcn amongst such a raee as this.

The Persians belong to the Aryan or Indo-European family, as Darius Hystaspes asserts in the inscription on his tomb. The word "Irán," which is the native name for the country ruled by the Shah, is the word "Aryan" in another form.

The language of the Persians in its most ancient form is closely akin to Sanskrit, in its most modern form to Hindustani; in all its forms it has affinity with the tongues of the West; and has been called "the Italian of the East." The character of the people, too, is in many respects Western, and they are considered "the French of the East."

The Persian physique is Caucasian, with a high forehead, well-formed nose, large, dark, impenetrable eyes, a short upper lip, a well-rounded chin, and very dark hair. Persians when young are of slight build, but well-knit and muscular. They are one of the few white races of Asia. Intellectually they are a well-endowed race, of quick understanding and imagination, lively and humorous, fond of pleasure and sport, with a strong love for their language and their exquisite national poetry. They are inquisitive, unreliable, and lacking in energy. Time is little valued. They are polite in word and gesture, and apparently generous, but sometimes with the hope of favours to come! They live at the heart of that part of the world in which the virtue of hospitality has a pre-eminence in its obligations and in its significance that is unknown to the same degree elsewhere. Persians

are loyal to causes and to individuals. But they have had no moral standard, and their inconsistencies are due to absence of principle. What a Persian lacks in breadth of view he makes up in concentration. He can take in a difficult idea if it be put into few words.

The following characteristic Persian story was told by Miss Bird :—

"The owner of a large henna mill in Yezd was very heavily taxed by the governor. Not being willing to part with such a large proportion of his gains, he announced he had taken Huzrati Abbas into partnership and would devote his share of the profits to the poor. Of course the governor could not do such an impious deed as to tax the property of one of the great saints, so the man was let off. The people coming to buy henna brought native offerings of tiny looking-glasses which were stuck all over the sides of the great mill stones, with strips of bright-coloured paper between. Trade has greatly increased, the camels which turn the stones are decorated with tassels of bright wool and bells; the living partner is said to be steadily amassing a fortune, but it is whispered that the portion of Saint Abbas for the poor is *not* large!"

Until the establishment of the Constitution in 1906 the Shah was absolute ruler and master of the lives and goods of all his subjects. This now is slightly modified. The law is based on the

Qur'án, but as the new Government is founded on Western ideas, the two are not compatible, and it is difficult to avoid friction.

A governor-general rules over each of the twenty-seven provinces, who is directly responsible to the central Government. The nomad tribes are ruled by chiefs who are responsible to the governors. It largely depends on these men whether the condition of a particular district be one of unrest and danger to life and property, or of settled peace under strong and wise control.

A good deal has been said on the Persian beliefs in past ages, and there is still something to be added in order to bring the account into harmony with present day facts.

Only a small remnant of the ancient *Zoroastrians* now live in Persia—about eight thousand in Yezd and a few hundreds in Kerman. Outside these cities they have their towers of silence, where the dead are exposed. Many restrictions, including a poll tax, were placed upon them by the Mohammedans, as a result of which some nine-tenths of the followers of Zoroaster left Persia and settled in Bombay, where they are most prosperous. Miss Bird in one of her letters thus refers to the Parsis of Yezd: "The Parsis live in a large quarter of their own, with much wider and cleaner streets than in the Moslem part of the town, also in several villages near. The women are utterly ignorant, they speak Dari and do not readily understand modern Persian."

The men are well educated and want schools for their girls. Many are merchants. They have good gardens and well-kept land, agriculture being strongly upheld by their religion. In the Zend-Avesta it is written, "Whoso cultivates barley, cultivates righteousness." They are moral, industrious, and intelligent; truthfulness is upheld by their religion; murder, theft, and polygamy are counted sins. They have no gospel, superstition is broadcast, yet a comparison of Zoroastrianism and Mohammedanism shows the life of the Parsis to be stronger and purer than that of the Moslem.

There are still *Jewish* quarters in most of the large towns, and in spite of the old feeling of toleration shown to the Jew, his lot to-day is often very sad. "Yáhúdi"—Jew—is a term of contempt. As a race the Jews are downtrodden and despised. Philanthropic and educational work are done amongst them by French Jews. The Anglican and the American Presbyterian Churches are doing much in the way of medical, educational, and direct spiritual work; the latter being valued since the Old Testament is read and taught. The Jews always held a prominent place in Miss Bird's sympathies. The first Persian woman convert to Christianity was a Jewess whom she had taught.

Christians are numerous, many of them being members of the old Eastern Churches—Armenians and Nestorians—while some are converts from the non-Christian faiths. There is a greater degree of religious liberty now than at any other time since

the Parthians ruled, but there is still much to be faced when those who have been followers of Mohammed declare themselves on the side of Christ.

Mohammedanism, the national faith of the Persians for nearly thirteen hundred years, proves them to be a vanquished people. Their religion is a standing testimony to their defeat by the Arabs. It is sad to see an ancient and honourable land crushed beneath the heel of a creed which, though possessing some elements of truth, is most deadly in its effects. The Persians have much in them which might make for righteousness, were they not stifled by a creed which knows nothing of love or progress.

A Persian prince once said to the writer, "All that is bad in Persia comes from Mohammedanism." And Canon Robinson writes: "Students of Mohammedanism . . . have not distinguished with sufficient care between Mohammedanism in theory and Mohammedanism in practice . . . nothing is easier than to draw an attractive picture of the benefits Mohammedanism ought to confer upon its converts, and of the high morality which its teachings ought to produce . . . nothing is more impossible than to find any Mohammedan country of which such a picture would be other than a caricature."[1]

Christ was the greatest of the prophets in Mohammed's eyes, and is therefore revered by his followers, but to them He is not the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Mohammedans are as a rule

[1] "Mohammedanism. Has it any future?" pp. 30, 32.

a solemn and austere people, probably because to them God is solemn and austere and distant. They have nothing dear or human in their religion, nothing that even calls forth their pity or their love, only what engenders fear and absolute submission. Islam is summed up in " complete surrender to the will of God." The creed is " Islam," a verbal noun derived from a root meaning submission to, faith in God, and the believers who so submit themselves are called Moslems, from the participle of the same root.

When the first white streak of dawn appears, when the morning star sets, and the sun rises, the solemn and impressive cry of the *muezzin* rings out from every minaret, " Allah Akbar," etc.—" God is most great, there is no God but God. I testify that Mohammed is the messenger of God—Come to prayer, come to salvation, prayer is better than sleep—God is most great, there is no God but God."

Mohammed's moral reformation was for his day and generation colossal, and his influence for good has been widespread. But all his influence has not been for good, and the greatest blot on his achievements and on his system has been and is the degradation of Mohammedan women. The traditions represent him as saying, " I have not left any calamity more detrimental to mankind than women." He either meant that the evils he bequeathed to his followers were not serious, or, and it is very evident that this was the case, he looked upon womanhood as such an evil that there was nothing in the world to approach it. Hence

the lot of a hundred million Moslem women. The Qur'án does not deny souls to women, though the idea is often taken for granted. In Islam men appropriate every advantage and privilege for themselves, and, to their everlasting shame be it spoken, have done everything possible to humiliate and debase womanhood. Girls are only brought up to be the slaves and toys of men, and for the most part are kept in a state of mental ignorance (for example, in Persia only three women in a thousand are educated), and are voiceless and defenceless against all attack. The veil, polygamy, and women's spiritual status, and all that these stand for, constitute her chief disabilities. When we look at the women of Persia, how little is suggested of strength and beauty, how much of oppression, of lack of development, of waste of power, of unsatisfied lives. And as the nation cannot rise above its womanhood how handicapped must the race be, of whom they are really the controlling force!

The Persian Moslems as Shiahs maintain the right of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, and his descendants to the *Imámat* or spiritual leadership of Islám, and believing the Twelve *Imáms* to be infallible guides, give them precedence over the Khalifas. The twelfth Imám, Al-Mahdi, is said to be still alive, but invisible—showing how the Shiahs feel the need of an intermediary, a constant revealer of the will of God. Each year the months of Muharram and Safar are set apart as months of mournings for Ali and his sons, Hasan and Husain,

during which all devout Moslems dress in black. The *tazieh*, with the Shiahs takes the form of theatrical representations of the principal events in the lives of Hasan and Husain, and endowments have been left for the annual performances. These are given twice daily for the first thirteen days of Muharram, the tenth day, on which Husain's death is commemorated, being the most fanatical day in the year. A temporary stage is erected, sometimes over a tank, in the courtyard of a large house. The chief spectators are in the windows round; others—men and women separately—are on stands erected for the purpose, some even climb trees, and the roofs are crowded. The performance begins with a very noisy band, the players riding on gaily caparisoned camels. The actors are all men and boys, who read their parts from scraps of paper given out by the prompter who walks about constantly; if any one makes a mistake he is at hand to give a visible rebuke, generally in the face. The acting is of the crudest, everything is said in a monotone, and is most difficult to understand. All the dressing and undressing is done publicly, and often some one supposed to be dead gets up and walks off the stage. Amusing and gruesome and unintelligible as most of it is to a foreigner, it is not so to the rest of the spectators. Everything is real to them. At each mention of the names of Mohammed, Ali, Hasan, or Husain, the wailing and beating of breasts begins afresh, and shows how firm a grip their faith has; but it is only on their emotions, not on their

hearts. To witness such a spectacle gives an insight into Mohammedanism that could not well be obtained in any other way.

In Yezd, instead of this miracle play the *nakhl* is carried; it is a large wooden erection hung with daggers on one side and looking glasses on the other. This custom is also connected with the Shiah martyrs. Fátima, the daughter of the prophet, is supposed to move it, but a great many people appear to help her! Then there is a night set apart for burning the effigy of Omar, a Sunni saint, but a usurper according to the Shiahs. The likeness between the burning of Omar and of Guy Fawkes is striking.

During the other six weeks of these mourning months *Rûza Khánis* are held constantly, often in tents erected for the purpose, at which readings and recitations from the lives of the prophets are given. There are also great "weeping" processions and "weeping" services held for men and women separately, at the mullās' houses or publicly in the streets. Any one may volunteer to "beat his breast for the prophet"; sometimes fifty or a hundred men may be seen standing in double line in front of the pulpit erected for the reading, stripped to the waist, and all beating their breasts in slow measured time, repeating in solemn, mournful tones, "*Aman, aman*"—mercy! mercy! Often the whole assembly join in, and their overwrought feelings find relief in floods of tears. Any who do not weep, it is said, will never enter heaven, being among the stony-hearted. Men also walk

in procession with bared shaven heads and white clothes, cutting themselves with knives till the blood runs down and calling on Ali, Hasan, and Husain. What a contrast! They suffer for their Imáms or religious leaders, Christ "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

During the month of Ramazán, the great fast is observed daily from sunrise to sunset, but from sunset to sunrise is spent in excess of every kind. This is no hardship for the leisured classes, but it tells on those who are obliged to work during the day. Many Persians do not fast, but they all pretend to do so. Indulgences are only granted to sick people and to travellers.

Almsgiving is fundamental and alms must be given, whether to the *dervish*, a religious beggar, who with his begging bowl and war axe plants himself at your door, or to the blind or lame beggars who line the road at the entrance to a town and who, especially on the eve of the Moslem sabbath, beg for alms in the names of their excellencies the prophets, the Virgin Mary, or even Jesus.

Every pious Moslem aims at one or more pilgrimages to Mecca or Meshed, or to Kerbela, where many Persians go. Much time and money are spent, but though the pilgrim has gained the name of Haji, Meshedi, or Kerbelai, and has gone up in the external esteem of his friends, his moral and spiritual standard is often infinitely lower than it was before.

The cry from the minaret, the devout praying

"A Blue-Tiled Mosque of Persia" Sōh, near Isfahān

(From a sketch by Miss J. Biggs)

in the bazar, or by the riverside, the meritorious fast, the pompous rich giving to the poor, the Haji returning from his pilgrimage heralded by trumpets, surrounded by friends and canopied with banners, the mosques, with their domes exquisitely tiled, or, as the shrine at Kum where Mohammed's daughter is buried, covered with pure plates of gold, are all picturesque Orientalisms; but where is the power, what is the fruit of this religion so strongly entrenched, so widely spread over the lands of the Near East ?

The trend of Mohammedanism in Persia is towards *Sufiism* and consequently mystic pantheism. At the present time many followers of the prophet are in revolt, some giving up all faith and becoming materialists ; others secretly accepting Christianity, being intellectually convinced of its truth.

But the greatest leakage from Islam is caused by *Bahâism*, whose attraction for Moslems consists in the fact that it is promulgated by their own people, that it can be believed secretly, and that its professors may openly appear as good Mohammedans still. The Bábís or Bahâis were originally the followers of Mirza Ali Muhammad, who called himself the Báb, or gate, a holy man of Shiraz who lived during the first half of last century. The followers of his successor Bahâ'ullah, who claimed to be a manifestation of God the Father, increased in numbers and suffered much persecution. The present leader of the sect, Abdul Bahâ or Abbas

Effendi, figures as the divinely appointed "messenger" for this present age to all who are ready to accord this character to him. In 1912 Abbas Effendi visited London, and in a West End flat men and women of note gathered to listen to this Eastern sage with his dignified personality. He spoke of the oneness of the human family, God being the Shepherd; and of international peace among nations and religions, the reality of religion being the cause of unity and love. Science, education, and civilization he regarded as necessary for full religion. Professor Browne speaks of "the supernatural claim—whatever its exact nature—which Abbas Effendi did and does advance," and elsewhere he says, "The only essential in Bahâi eyes are the love of Bahâ'ullah and his accredited successor, Abdul Bahâ, the belief in their divine character, and the eager desire to listen to the reading of their words . . . which are for the most part rhapsodies interspersed with ethical maxims." It follows from these extravagant claims that the religion of which these men are the founders challenges the acceptance of all the world, or at least of all those who believe in God at all. For if God's essence has been mirrored in a perfect human being, no believer in God can afford to neglect these manifestations except at his peril. But it is scarcely wise to say this before its Western friends, and Bahâism in the West is careful not to make inconvenient demands which it shrewdly perceives will not be granted. Its teaching is essentially pantheistic and Sufiistic.

Bahâism assumes the main tenets of the religion of each man whom it hopes to gain. Thus, in the West it often uses Christian technical terms, such as "Logos," in quite a different sense. For instance, Bahâ'ullah is often meant when the Logos is spoken of; and "resurrection" means becoming changed in soul, or converted to this faith.

A characteristic of Bahâism is wilful misrepresentation, e.g., in regard to the number of its converts—millions is the word commonly used, even to "fifty million souls." Present authorities suggest one hundred thousand in Persia, and possibly fifteen thousand outside, of whom two-thirds are Shiah Mohammedans. Believers may be found among Buddhists, Taoists, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jews. A more intellectual form of the teaching has been adopted in America, Russia, France, and Germany, and even in England one hundred converts may be found.

There is to most Western minds a charm about anything which comes from the East. And, when the Orient claims once again to have given birth to a new religion—a great world-wide movement—the attraction seems to a few to be irresistible. Some Westerners are drawn to Bahâism by its supposed freedom from dogma; others through its teaching of unity, brotherhood, and tolerance; while to others its appeal comes through its claim to be a world-wide religion, capable of embracing and unifying all other great faiths. But while it is possible to be in sympathy with its social and

philanthropic propaganda, yet the philosophic basis and religious tenets of this new religion are subversive of the Christianity of the Gospel.

At one time this movement seemed likely in Persia to prove a half-way house towards Christianity, but now it has so developed as to be rather a barrier. Men are content to come into the twilight of this faith, and there to entrench themselves, and are less easy to move than if they had remained Mohammedans. Bahâis have set themselves the task of believing all religions and uniting all men in a common brotherhood. They would do away with war and educate and elevate their womanhood. They are devoted to the person of their present leader; their periodicals are becoming numerous, and are printed in Persian and several European languages. They are a courteous people, free from contempt of others, and personally attractive. They often listen respectfully to the claims of the Gospel, yet the opposition of Bahâi influence in Persia is considerable, and is increasing daily. In Teheran they have three women missionaries—a doctor, a nurse, and an educationist. It is an easy faith—easier to accept than Christianity, as a public profession is not needed, and its followers can still be loyal to Islam, while a deep self-satisfaction lulls the conscience. Like other human cults it values what is good and beautiful, and calls upon men to live noble lives, but it tells little of the power with which to carry out what it inculcates.

CHAPTER IV

Persian Conditions and Customs

TO breathe the atmosphere in which Mary Bird wrote her letters and lived her life it is further necessary to look at some of the everyday conditions and customs in the land of the Lion and the Sun.

The presence of the sun in the Persian symbol is a relic of the past, when it was the emblem of the fire-worshippers. Later on, when Mohammedanism held sway, the lion was added, because Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet, was called "the lion of God." A woman's face was introduced still later by a Shah who wished to honour his favourite wife.

Persia is gradually exchanging the slow, monotonous beat of the Oriental pendulum for the whir and whirl of Western wheels. The process is a slow one; but the great point to notice is that the change has begun. And if this forward movement be for the good of the country, may Persia have the grace of continuance. She will need a great deal of backing, and it is the help of England which she has, up to the present, most looked for and appreciated. Figures (which are in their very essence an insult to the Oriental imagination) are difficult to get, and are only arrived at after long

and patient inquiry, but the broad facts of life and faith are visible on every hand.

Rasm va Kismet, custom and destiny, habit and fate play a very large part in the life of every subject of the Shah. Custom is connected with everything from birth to death, and fate is perhaps the largest element in the life of a Persian. Etiquette, too, is always in evidence and counts for much. Some titles are hereditary, but very many are bought from the Shah by both men and women, and give dignity and importance to their owners.

In large cities such as Isfahan and Yezd the bazars are very extensive, each trade having its own part. They are covered-in lanes, with high vaulted roofs, and are delightfully cool and dark in the summer after the scorching dusty glare outside, and warm and dry in winter.

To a Persian the bazar is the hub of the universe. Here men and boys of all ages make and buy and sell with as much noise and discussion and gesticulation as possible, counting time as of no value. Heavily laden beasts, from the supercilious camel to the tiny brown donkey, constantly block the thoroughfare.

News of all kinds is given and received. The women, who are few, and generally go about in parties, are all closely veiled and draped in black. Colour to the Persian is symbolic, and this is specially seen in the dress of the people. Men wear bright colours, but usually have an outer coat

of dark cloth or a cashmere shawl, and tall, black lambskin hats, or round, close-fitting felt ones—white turbans are worn by mullás, and dark blue ones by sayyids, who also affect green clothing. Generally speaking, white represents purity and is worn by teachers and students, red implies divine wisdom, green initiation into the secrets of the Most High, and yellow is the prerogative of royalty.

Carpets have been made in Persia for more than four thousand years. It is difficult to over-estimate their beauty and durability. They excel all others, and find their way to every part of the world, commanding increasingly high prices. The makers have intuitively grasped from nature herself what is correct in colours, and so produce work of high artistic merit. All rugs and carpets are made on hand looms, many by the tribespeople, others in the villages. A whole family often work at one carpet, and this to some extent accounts for the irregularities of pattern and weaving, spontaneity and individuality being striking qualities of Persian art, but the irregularities are also introduced to avert the "evil eye." A good carpet has ten thousand stitches to the square foot, the best ones forty thousand. Some of the finest and best, particularly silk rugs, are made in factories in Kerman. Child labour is very largely employed, as the tiny fingers can do the finest work and for the lowest wage. The working hours are from sunrise to sunset, an average of twelve hours a day. Persians pride

themselves on colour being their " secret and glory," and wondrous are the ways in which they get and combine their colours—madder roots, grape juice, shell fish, indigo, buckthorn, cochineal, onion skins, husks of green walnuts, milk, turmeric, henna, larkspur, and mulberry are all used singly or in combination to produce the lasting and beautiful shades. The punishment for using aniline dyes is said to be amputation of the right hand. Animal forms are allowed in Persian designs, and the tree of life is often represented. These are in accord with the light-heartedness of the Shiahs compared with the Turks, whose designs are mostly geometrical and reflect Sunni austerity. About thirty different kinds of carpets are woven in the country.

Dreams have been through the ages a way of teaching the people of the East, and the Persians in this century still believe in what they see in their sleep. A few out of many dreams have been thus narrated by missionaries to whom they were told :—

" A man who seemed very much in earnest says he had a dream which was the cause of his first coming to see me. In his dream he thought he saw a white, shining figure, standing with a veil over its face, and under a strong compulsion he fell down and adored it. The figure held in its hand a very fragrant bunch of flowers, to which Yahya took a great fancy. The figure said, ' You are

not worthy of them.' He then went nearer and kissed his feet twice, when the flowers were given to him. On asking who the figure was, the reply was given, 'The Christ of God.' Alluding to this dream Yahya said on another occasion, 'If this age is the age of some other prophet or religious guide,' mentioning them, 'why did not one of them appear to me instead of Christ?'"

"In November, 1913, two brothers and a friend had an almost identical dream, to the effect that a great multitude of people were gathered together in the desert—which was bright with celestial light, when a voice between heaven and earth was heard, saying, 'Repent, all salvation given is through Jesus; the coming of the Lord is nigh.' Afraid to divulge their dream to the village mullā, they kept it to themselves until a day or so later they happened to see a dervish sitting by a stream eating his mid-day meal with a book (the Bible) open in front of him; as he proved to be rather an attractive sort of man they told him their dream. This man had been baptized early in the year, and since had suffered a great deal for his new-found faith, and at the time was fleeing away disguised as a dervish, exactly for what reason is not known. Anyhow, he proved a veritable Philip to the three inquirers, with the result that shortly after they turned up at Isfahan for teaching."

"A man in hospital had his finger amputated. A few months later he returned with gangrene of the foot; this, too, was amputated, but the gangrene

appeared again and the man became very ill. The doctor thought there was no hope for him, so let him go home, as a Mohammedan objects to dying in a Christian hospital. He was visited several times after he left. Then one night he had a dream in which he saw Christ, and waking up he said, 'I am going to get better; Christ has healed me,' and from that day the black of the gangrene fell off. He begged to return to hospital, and whenever he is asked how he is, he says Christ has healed him. He is very bright and happy, and attending the inquirers' class regularly. Truly his spared life is as a miracle."

A noticeable feature in the streets of a Persian town is the absence of houses and the presence of high walls, with occasionally a tiny barred window high up, and at intervals either low doors or sometimes a large, important-looking, nail-studded door. Where are the houses? and how dark they must be! Enter one of the doors, it may lead you into a long passage or almost directly into a paved courtyard varying from a few feet to hundreds of feet square. Often there are trees and flowers in the centre, and sometimes a tank at one side—these tanks are not only unhealthy, but many children fall in and are drowned. Parents look upon it as kismet, and do nothing to safeguard them. The house, with many doors and windows, is built round the courtyard, and a large house has a summer and a winter side. Parts of the house may

have a second story; all the roofs are flat and useful. Among other things, people walk and sleep on the roof, or dry clothes and fruit, such as apricots and sultanas, there; children play on the roof, and, as may be expected, accidents are not at all uncommon. The chief reason for this style of house seems to be protection from thieves and privacy for the women. A man entering a compound will often cry, "Women, away!" and frequently a blind man is chosen as the muezzin who gives the call to prayer from the minaret, so that he may not see the women in the courtyards below. The flat roofs of different houses join, and make an easy way of getting from house to house, but this is only permissible among acquaintances. Many houses appear almost palatial, but the contrast in the interior between the apartments of the men and women is very marked. A room is well furnished with carpets, curtains, and cushions, but is often spoiled by European clocks (generally all showing different time), and rows of cheap lamps and vases, which the natives consider beautiful additions. The ceilings in large houses are often painted, and the walls decorated with stars of looking-glass. In some of the old palaces there is very beautiful coloured glass, the art of making which has been lost. Still, no care is taken of the glass.

Betrothals, which are as binding as marriages, are often made a means of social and political alliance between families and rulers. Though

Persian literature abounds in stories of romantic love, the ordinary and most commonplace plan is for the arrangements for a betrothal to be made without the knowledge of either party, and as children, and particularly girls, are betrothed as young as 5 years of age, it seems the only course. On the wedding-day, when the bride is 10 or 12 or older, the bridegroom, who may be a youth or an old man, sees her for the first time, though she may have seen him through her veil. The nuptials mean the veiling of the bride to receive her husband, and she is behind this veil when he first comes to claim her, and only by marriage is that veil lifted to him. Bitter disappointment, as well as unanticipated satisfaction, are among the surprises of these bridal unveilings.

A Mohammedan may have four wives at once, generally having separate apartments and often different houses. This applies mainly to the well-to-do middle class. Many of the upper class who have been to Europe or come much in contact with Europeans, consider it to be the right thing to have only one wife. Among the poor there are not many who can afford more than one, though muleteers are frequently found with a wife at each end of the caravan route, and sometimes one on the way. Divorce and re-marriage are very easy, temporary marriages are often resorted to, and widows may marry again. A woman can easily be divorced by her husband for no better reason than that she is sick, childless, or ugly. As a woman she has no rights. There is no word in

Persian for "home" or for "wife"; a man speaks of his "house" and his "woman," or his "son's mother." The word *zenana*, derived from the Persian word *zan*, a woman, is not used, but *anderún*, meaning inside, is the name given to the women's apartments, and *birún*, meaning outside, to the men's apartments.

Though the women are secluded, they have liberty to go out, as they are closely veiled and difficult to recognize. The royal and other great ladies only drive out in closed carriages and, except in the desert, with blinds down and a eunuch on the box, and they only visit their own relatives. They are not allowed to go to the mosque, and their religious life is confined to their own houses. It is rarely possible to see a lady of this class alone, for though she may be the only one sitting in state, a bevy of servants and slaves (of the latter there are still many in Persia) surround her and frequently join in the conversation. A Persian lady once said, "We are slaves in our own houses; our servants are free compared with us."

There are model wives and mothers in the East to-day, and nowhere are husbands more completely under the influence of wise and devoted wives, or of evil and designing ones, than in some Persian homes. Boys and girls are heavily handicapped in their home life, the Persian "home" being perhaps the worst possible sphere for their moral development.

In a Mohammedan house, at the very moment

of death, the nearest to the dead proclaims the fact to all who are within hearing. Their cry is taken up and repeated by friends of the family near and far. Every sympathizing woman friend, and every hired mourner, who hurries to the house announces her coming by the conventional shriek. The Oriental death-cry is indescribable in its peculiar tones, and its unique impressiveness. Persians are emotional and demonstrative, and their tears flow easily. They feel intensely, and give utterance to their feelings as only an Oriental can. Friends' tears at a time of sorrow are highly valued, and are often caught and preserved in little tear bottles. These expressions of mourning may not commend themselves to our judgment, but we should be lacking in charity and a knowledge of human nature if we condemned them. Persians have so little wherewith to give comfort at such a time. The body is quickly borne to a running stream, washed, wrapped in cotton wool and camphor, and folded in a sheet, and is then taken, carried shoulder high on a bier, to the burying-ground, people following wailing and reciting the virtues of the departed. If the deceased was a person of repute, a tent is put up over the grave, where a mullá recites passages from the Qur'án for several days. Relatives and friends come at least once a week to weep at the grave. The eyes of the dead, they say, will be "on the road" watching for them to come. Some specially holy people are buried temporarily above ground, awaiting the opportunity of being taken

to a holy place such as Kum or Kerbela, for final interment. To the friends the light has gone out, and how great is the darkness!

Something has already been said of Persian roads and the means of transit, but a few details are needed to show the delights and difficulties of what is such an essential part of life in Persia, namely, journeys. They may extend over days and even months. Getting a caravan together, sorting out necessary travelling kit, buying supplies of food, are all lengthy proceedings. The best season for a journey is the early spring or late autumn, when the stage can be done by day. To get off at 4 a.m. it is necessary to be stirring before 3 a.m., unless the party is very small, breakfast, packing, and loading the animals may take two hours. About half-way a halt will be made for a meal, either by a stream, or under a tree, it may be a walnut, an olive, or a mulberry; or it may be by a ruined tower, or under the shadow of a great rock. The day's stage may take eleven or twelve hours, and at the end of it a blackened, dilapidated room in a *chapar-khaneh* (post-house) or *caravanserai* (the inn of the East) may be secured as a resting-place for the night. Then immediately follows a cup of tea for every one. After this the room will be swept out—the floors are mud and the dust is terrible—a rug or two laid down, beds and mosquito nets put up, and a curtain nailed across the place where the door should be.

In the hot weather travellers start about 4 p.m., halting for dinner at 9 p.m., the destination being reached just when the sun rises and the flies wake up. Happy are those who can readily adapt themselves to existing conditions, and eat and sleep when and where possible. To such these night journeys over the deserts are entrancing. It is seldom really dark. The silence is only broken by the caravan bells, and a good traveller can most restfully ride on through the night. But there are many irregularities arising from the party, the road, or the season, and all the journeys are not over deserts and plains. Many are the rivers to be forded, and the stony mountain-sides to be climbed. The horses and mules are wonderfully sure-footed, but there are places where it feels safer to be on one's own feet. And there is often the possibility of encountering brigands, and parting with some of one's most cherished possessions.

Miss Bird gives many picturesque accounts of nights and days of travel. The following extracts are from diaries of different journeys :—

"To-day we passed such quantities of gypsies, the women carrying the babies on their backs. All their worldly possessions were on small cows and donkeys; on the top of one donkey-load a little child was lying fast asleep, strapped firmly round the waist; two tiny donkeys were carried in saddle-bags on the back of a cow, sick lambs are always carried thus, cocks and hens perched on the loads without being tied. Some of the people were very

handsome, but sunburnt till almost black. Their clothing was very poor, but the women wore bracelets or necklaces. They were so generous, offering us milk, and food for the horses. I took such a sweet baby for a few minutes. The women said a side-saddle must be very tiring unless English women had one leg stronger than another ! "

" The place we usually stay at was entirely filled by a Persian Prince-Governor from Tabriz, on his way to Teheran ; he passed us yesterday riding a beautiful white Arab horse with richly-worked crimson saddle-cloth, and twenty attendants all well mounted and armed. Each had a beautiful falcon on his right hand, which, when the horses go fast, spread their wings, as if flying. To-day we met a party coming from Teheran to meet him, with sweet little lambs and kids peeping out of their saddle-bags, which they will sacrifice the moment they meet the Prince."

" To-day off by 3.30 a.m., and arrived here at 12.15, a long ride through a howling wilderness. We passed two rivers, but the water of both was so salt that even the poor thirsty mules would not touch it. Wherever there has been water, the ground is covered with salt, and is quite barren ; for miles the only living things we saw were lizards and huge black flying beetles. We all exclaimed with delight when a lark sprang up singing. The sunrise was very pretty, and the morning star so bright. I wonder if it is ever so bright in England ? "

" My seat is the gnarled root of a great white

mulberry tree which shelters me from the brilliant sunshine while we halt for lunch; the sky is absolutely blue, not a cloud anywhere, and against it, in grand silent beauty, stand out endless peaks and crags of the surrounding mountains. A rushing, bubbling mountain torrent reminds one of the text, 'Everything shall live whither the river cometh,' for the valley on either side of it is terraced with fruit trees and with corn just ripe and golden. Vines are not planted separately, but are allowed to climb over any and every fruit tree, as 'it never kills the tree it grows over.' Walnut and peach trees are planted as closely as possible together."

"I stopped at a caravanserai, which was very noisy, some pedlars had come from Yezd, and the villagers crowded round in eager excitement to see the latest patterns in prints, handkerchiefs, and other things, and strike a good bargain. Their patience is marvellous! They will sit and haggle for hours over 1½d.; the pedlar declaring by all the prophets he paid more for the article than the price offered; the customer rising in hot haste declaring he is being cheated and will not pay more, but returning to the business with fresh vigour in a few minutes. How often one is reminded of the text, 'It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer.' Truly the East is marvellously unchanged!"

During the last ten years many travellers in Persia have fallen into the hands of brigands. Miss Bird told how "Dr. Carr fell into the hands of a robber band, who carried him, his servants,

and his caravan off to one of their mountain haunts, and took everything—clothes, money, goods, and animals—from him, only allowing him to have his sun hat and some old clothes of their own. After keeping him two days, almost without food, he and his party were released and had to tramp about eighteen miles to a village. While he was with these brigands, they constantly expressed their regret that it had been his kismet to fall into their hands. He returned their treatment by doctoring them and telling them of the true way of salvation. The man who told us of it said, 'It was wonderful, the doctor never swore once, though we took all his things.' "

In January, 1912, Miss Bird wrote: "I am safely in Yezd, . . . the journey from Isfahan, owing to delays, took sixteen instead of ten days. . . . We had a false alarm of robbers and the muleteer drove our mules and donkeys back to the last village at a gallop . . . It was disappointing . . . but the false alarm had saved us . . . from a small robber band who were waiting about a mile beyond where we turned back. They captured another caravan . . . the owner was very distressed, but his friends tried to console him by repeating constantly, 'Do not boil, it was fate!' That night we joined a big camel caravan and marched from sunset to sunrise . . . it was a glorious bright frosty night . . . but a bitter wind. Our caravanserai was on a mountain summit deep in snow, and it snowed for six hours over the pass and while we were descending to Nain.

Here we heard a band of robbers had taken possession of the lonely caravanserai in the midst of the desert, and the Governor of Nain . . . said we must wait until the robbers moved, or a large caravan came along. The fourth morning . . . we rushed out, almost ready to hug one hundred and fifty camels with merchandise and money for the bank in Yezd; thirty-four armed men accompanied it. . . . They gladly consented to our travelling with them, only we must wait twenty-four hours for a friend's caravan with sixty donkeys and thirty-four men to arrive. I wish you could have seen the cavalcade—each set of twenty camels fastened together and led by a man riding a donkey, our little party of five mules and my donkey, one guard sent by the governor to march with me, and then the sixty donkeys. Every bell had been muffled, no one was to speak aloud to man or animal, and my guard undertook to conduct us 'without road,' i.e. off the main road. We started a little before sunset, and by dark were four miles off the caravan road in the midst of a stony desert, it was a very dark night with a cutting wind and snow. The men were very much alarmed and asked if I was. I was so glad I could tell them that God had taken away all fear from me, I had asked for His protection and believed He would guard us. A number of men came round and asked me to pray with them in a whisper. We could see the robbers' fire on the mountain side, but the God-sent dark clouds hid us from view and we passed quickly and noise-

"ABBASABĀD"

(From a sketch by the late Mrs. H. White)

lessly along. The men longed to smoke but were afraid of the lights being seen; they were so thoughtful and kind, leading my donkey over bad places and making it keep in the middle of the caravan. At daybreak . . . we had passed the 'thieves' place.' The men began to talk and untie the bells, and when I proposed to my guard that we should thank God that He had answered our prayer, such a number came round, exclaiming, '*Elohi*' at the end of each sentence. . . . We were only allowed to remain while the bipeds had a hasty meal of bread and the quadrupeds of barley, and then went on ten miles to a larger village. My guard asked me about England, our constitution, rates, and taxes, and why English girls as well as boys were educated. I explained to him, and he exclaimed, 'Nearly all the people in Persia are like wild animals wandering in the dark'; and then he listened quietly while I told him of Jesus Christ 'the Light of the World.' To my surprise he said, 'We do not know, we have not seen the light.' "

Then to the rolling Heaven itself I cried,
Asking "what lamp had destiny to guide
Her little children stumbling in the dark?"
And—"A blind understanding!" Heaven replied.

One moment in annihilation's waste,
One moment of the well of Life to taste,—
The stars are setting and the caravan
Starts from the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

CHAPTER V

Mary Bird as a Pioneer

PERSIA was spoken of by the Church Missionary Society as a field for missionary work as early as 1800, but for various reasons it was not occupied. About 1812 parts of the Prayer Book were translated and printed in Persian. Henry Martyn's Persian translation of the New Testament was printed in Russia in 1815, and received with eagerness in Persia, even by the Shah. An English traveller, Captain Gordon, is cited as saying, "You little think how generally the English mullá Martyn is known throughout Persia, and with what affection his memory is cherished." In 1869 the Rev. R. Bruce (afterwards the Rev. Canon Bruce, D.D.) obtained permission from the C.M.S. to return to India by way of Persia so that he might "ascertain how far there might be opportunities for mission work in that country." As early as 1858 the majority of the Mohammedan inquirers and visitors in Constantinople, Smyrna, and Tabriz, had been Persians. Mr. Bruce went to Persia expecting to find a spiritual famine, but was soon confronted by the overwhelming calamity of a great famine for bread, to help in the relief of which he did everything possible. The constant cry was, "God bless you; you Christians have more

pity than our people." Old inhabitants of Isfahan and Julfa still talk of what he and Mrs. Bruce did. For six years they worked on, living in Julfa, as it was impossible then for any foreigner to live in the fanatical city of Isfahan. In June, 1875, the C.M.S. decided that the time had come "to open a Mission in the Persian-speaking districts of the Persian empire," and Mr. Bruce was asked to do this. The work was begun in a very small way, chiefly among the Armenians, but in time two doctors and a clergyman were added to the staff, and one lady for work in the Armenian girls' school.

It was not until 1891 that work among Mohammedan women was considered possible, and for this most difficult and unknown task, Mary Bird was chosen. The late Rev. H. Carless, writing in December, 1891, said:—

"The country is most surely opening up for the Gospel. Rulers and traders are all in God's hand, and He uses them for His own designs. There has been a large advent of Europeans this year into the country. . . . A British Consul has been appointed to Isfahan who shows a most cordial and friendly spirit to the Mission. Everything shows a quiet advance forward and a steadily opening door. . . . Converse with inquiring Mohammedans is frequent, and God's love is surely touching men's hearts. It is a day perhaps of small things; but we do not despise it. . . . Miss Bird and Miss Stubbs reached us in May last."

So it happened that Mary Bird came to do the work of a pioneer, of a sapper, of a gatherer out of stones, of a ploughman, of a sower in that "dry-as-dust Mohammedan land," and now, twenty-four years later, it is said that, "In the death of Mary Bird Persia has experienced the greatest loss it has had since the days of Henry Martyn." How has it come about that Mary Bird has meant so much to Persia, and what did she do that her loss is so universally felt? It may be gathered that she was no ordinary woman, yet she was simple, unpretentious, unassuming, and this probably was the secret of her usefulness; she only wanted to be an instrument in the hand of the Great Worker, and this she certainly was. No woman's name is better known in Persia to-day than that of *Khánum Maryam*, or "Lady Mary," the name by which she was usually known, *Hakím Maryam*, or "Doctor Mary," being sometimes substituted.

On her arrival Mary Bird lived with Dr. and Mrs. Bruce in the mission house, Julfa, and at once began to look for her work—that of a pioneer is seldom ready to hand. She had had no special training, but possessed a great deal of tact and common sense, and a good general knowledge of life. The first things to be done were to learn the language and make friends with the women. Education for Moslem women was not thought of, medical work had been carried on by a male doctor, and even this had lapsed. Miss Bird quickly acquired an excellent knowledge of Persian, and also spent an

hour daily on Arabic, this being a great help in the clear understanding of Persian, and, as the language of the Qur'án, a knowledge of it being much appreciated by the educated classes. She spoke of her first Persian lesson as follows :—

"Thursday a mirza came for the first time, a tall, well-made man. White shirt, pea-green coat, wide dark-blue trousers, loose dark-blue outer robe, and white turban make a picturesque costume. His stock of English consists of 'good,' 'good-bye' and 'both,' so there is no temptation to talk. The method is, he reads first, then I repeat it after him until I can catch the sound, then I have to spell it out, and try to supply the right vowels (which are never written), and name the different signs. Then he sets me a copy. They hold the paper in the left hand, and do not put it on a table while writing, and use a reed pen. The mirza tells me I should talk in a slow and dignified manner like the mullás, and not chatter fast like the princesses."

Some of Miss Bird's early impressions may be of interest. She wrote :—

"I went to the Persian service in the morning. The church was well filled with Armenians. There were a few Mohammedans in the gallery. I had a class of five Armenians in the afternoon who knew simple English, we all sat on the ground. After service Dr. Bruce took us for a walk in the fields; we had a long talk on Mohammedanism. I did not know that every country where it prevails is

desert. Arabia, Persia, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Northern Africa; formerly these lands were more fruitful and much more inhabited. Yesterday in the fields I saw a brown snake quite a yard long. We can hear jackals at night; they come at this time of the year to steal grapes from the vineyards. They never come through the gates into the streets, nor do they attack people."

"Last Saturday I had my first Persian visitors! A bride of 12 years old, dressed in brilliant green silk trousers, which have attached socks of the same material, beautifully fitted to the foot; crimson silk jacket with gold embroidery round it, left open in front to show the white shirt; short full divided skirt of crimson flowered silk; red and yellow slippers. Of course over this finery she had her outdoor dress of black chadar and white veil reaching to her knees, with a fine embroidery over the eyes. She was such a pretty child, with lovely eyes. It was very embarrassing, for I had no one to interpret, and my words are few. They were too polite to laugh, but sometimes their eyes twinkled. The moment they saw my chair they exclaimed 'throne,' so I gave it to the bride and sat at her feet, with the mother-in-law, the most fearful-looking old witch of a woman, and her four friends. Givork brought some pears to the door, which I tried to offer properly, putting the dish on the floor in front of the principal guest, then offering a pear in both hands, saying, 'God be with you and give health.' They are village people and live about

a mile from here ; they invited me to go as soon as I can talk ; 'Learn quickly, quickly. We will send a horse or donkey for you.' At present I can only understand and speak a little Persian, and the only person I have visited alone is a poor old woman. She started on a pilgrimage to Mecca, as Mohammedans believe that if they die there they are certain to go to heaven ; but she had only gone a short way when she fell off the mule she was riding and broke her arm, so her friends brought her back. Now she is unhappy, she thinks she will not get to heaven. I do so long to tell her all about the true way there. A young Armenian bride was in church on Sunday morning in her bridal dress, always given by the bridegroom, a handsome figured cream satin ; a sort of little black velvet cap studded with silver ornaments, and small white net veil ; black silk chadar with broad bands of gold work down the front but no veil ; four bracelets, five rings, and handsome brooch and earrings in filigree gold. She waited at the door for me, and I invited her, in spite of her grandeur, to class. She came and was so nice, thoughtful, and unaffected, and begged to have her name entered as a regular member."

"My Persian friend came and brought me a present of some *mâst*—sour milk. She looked very ill. I made out that she is a widow with no sons, and her daughters are married. I told her I had a mother, one brother with one wife (she repeated 'One ! one !' as if astonished), and two sisters.

She said: 'Married?' 'No.' 'Twelve years old?' 'More.' She shook her head solemnly. She would be my 'friend for life' was all I really understood."

"The Europeans declare the character of the Persian people is summed up in the word 'to-morrow,' so great is their procrastination and love of ease. The women seem dreadfully ignorant, only a few wealthy ones can read or write. Two who called on me said they liked pictures, but when I gave them some to look at, they held them upside down. Their delight was great over my clock and watch; they had never seen any before."

"Miss Bruce has taken me to visit some Persians who live near. It all seemed so strange. At the door you take off your shoes; there are no chairs or tables in the rooms, you sit cross-legged on the floor. Soon cups of very, very sweet tea without milk, and fruits, are brought in on trays and set before the principal guest; taking the cup in both hands they hand it, saying, 'You are welcome in the name of God'; you must answer, 'May your hands never be tired'; they reply, 'May your head never be tired.' Then the questions begin. 'Why do you not paint your face?' 'Why are your nails and hair not dyed red?'—this is supposed to show holiness—'Does your hair grow round?' From babyhood to old age they have their hair in long plaits, varying in number from four to fifteen, hanging down their backs. They only unfasten the plaits when they go to

the bath, and the woman there does it up again while quite wet, which makes it keep wonderfully smooth."

"I am sure this waiting time is very good for my impatient spirit. Oh! that childlike faith and trust may grow as well as power of speech. I try not to mind mistakes, but to talk and make friends with those who come, and they afterwards introduce me to their friends; but I do not attempt to speak on religion just yet, as they would begin to argue, and many words with totally different meanings are so alike in sound, that I might assent when I ought not to."

"I think I never felt so unfit for the work as now that I see it waiting around me. The terrible ignorance and superstition of the people is dreadful. Nearly all the people wear charms, the mother fastens a dried sheep's eye round her baby's neck, or on his cap, to keep off the evil eye. In visiting you must never notice or pet the children, as, if a Christian does so, they think the evil eye will fall on the child, and some harm will happen to it. The proper thing to say is, 'What an ugly child,' or, 'Whatever God wills.' It is very saddening: sin, sorrow, suffering, oppression, avarice, and injustice seem everywhere; and God's loving mercy, the gift of His Son our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, unknown. Judging from the vast influence of Christian mothers in England, it must surely be a matter of the greatest importance in the evangelization of Persia, that the women

and girls should be reached as soon as possible; besides they are the greatest sufferers. What steps can we take to get at the children before they be ruined soul and body by daily contact with deceit and impurity? In the anderún where all self-restraint is laid aside, they hear and see from infancy such things, that before they are able to judge for themselves, their minds are utterly depraved. Life in these big anderúns is degrading, wicked beyond description."

"I have seen poor little brides sobbing bitterly for their mothers. I wonder what you would think of a Persian girl's life! Certainly it needs protection and extension. Fancy childhood over at 9 years old and married life beginning! I called on a proud mamma of 13 years old lately, rejoicing over her son and heir."

"The mullás stopped a girl's class by assuring the parents that any girl reading with a foreigner would probably be childless."

As a result of a little "first aid" rendered to her neighbours, Khánum Maryam's fame as a "doctor," or, as she called herself, a "quack," quickly spread. She wrote:—

"People come daily from the villages for medicine—ten, twenty, or even forty miles—which means two or three days' journey, and this to consult an unqualified person. Several times when wanting to send them to the dispensary for treatment they have said: 'Our husbands have not given us leave to see a man.' Surely this proves

the need of lady doctors. Among the women there seems an uncertainty as to whether there is a life beyond the grave. Their frantic grief and wailing, 'To-day my child or husband is lost, lost, lost,' is dreadful to hear. The other day, when a village woman was moaning over the death of her only boy, I tried to tell of the 'home for little children.' She and her friends listened eagerly, and then broke out into louder wailing, for 'No one had told him, he never knew.'"

"Last night we found every one busy lighting up their houses with native lamps, just small shallow cups with oil and floating wicks. We had none, and Givork was dancing frantically in front of our door, wild that it was not done. 'Did we not know it was the Shah's birthday? Bruce Sahib's was done —he was English and Persian—why were not we?' We assured him we were, and got ten candles, which he stuck on bits of wood and hammered into the mud wall. They burnt beautifully in the still, warm air, and he was quite happy."

"The other night, a poor girl of 11 was beaten to death by her father for not having finished making a pair of shoes. The man—I hear—will probably be fined! When I begin visiting I must go and see the poor mother, whom I know a little. No Persian woman has ever been baptized here, nor has one ever declared herself a Christian; the Americans in Teheran up till last year had no women converts, no Christian mothers. No wonder the land is in such a state."

Three months after coming to Persia, Miss Bird wrote to her home people :—

" I cannot help longing for a good talk with you all sometimes, but am not pining, for that would be wrong. I think it is far harder for those left behind. I am afraid you are missing me a little bit, and I cannot bear to think you should have one hour's less happiness because of me, and yet I am afraid I am not unselfish enough to wish to be loved less. I do not regret coming, though at times my unfitness for the work is overpowering. You know when I was confirmed father gave me for my text : ' Be not afraid, only believe,' and the admonition is more than ever necessary for me. Gideon is so encouraging for weak characters like me. I am sure if God should see fit to use me to help any of these poor people, they will see at once the power is His, not mine."

Miss Bird was unaccustomed to riding and found it nervous work, yet, as with other difficulties, she overcame this, and outwardly was invariably brave. She wrote :—

" When visiting in town I nearly had a nasty accident. We were riding along a very narrow alley and came close to a blind corner round which a camel came heavily laden. The driver called, ' Stand still, there is not room to pass farther on.' I drew Whitey close up to the wall, and by bending down escaped being knocked by the loads of that and four other following camels, which were fastened in a long line. The sixth rounded the corner with a

tremendous box, and I saw I must be crushed. I could not dismount as my feet were jammed against the wall. There was no room to turn, and the driver being ahead with the first camel of course could not see. Often twenty or thirty are thus roped together. There was nothing to be done but keep still, and be crushed or killed. Involuntarily I reined Whitey up tighter. It saw the danger, trembled, and flung itself down; the box only knocked my shoulder, and the danger was passed. . . . I never saw such an instance of the instinct of an animal. We were both unhurt, got up, and I went on my way with another Ebenezer to recount."

From the first the native women were attracted to Khánum Maryam, but as time went on, her popularity became so great that those in high places were alarmed. Was not this woman getting at their women? What would this mean for Persia? The Persian knows, though he may not put it into so many words, that no country can rise above the level of its women. They have the first innings with the children, and though they are despised and "sit behind the curtain," they are very powerful. But under existing conditions they are powerful only to keep down, not to exalt; they are powerful to hinder, not to advance, their people in their relative position to the great nations of the world.

Miss Bird was the object of most of the opposition which was called out during the years 1891–95.

All that was said and done caused her much suffering, but she was apparently fearless and ready for all emergencies. A few extracts from her letters at this period will give some idea of what she had to face. By "town" is meant Isfahan, as these letters were written from Julfa, two miles away:—

"The Armenian Governor of Julfa has appointed a policeman to accompany me! I did not want him, but as the proposal came from him it is best to accept. He is such a lazy fellow, hates walking fast, which does not suit the wicked wild Tabbie. I have been free from all fear, though you know what a coward I naturally am. Lately even the nervous feeling on going to a new house has been taken from me. How much better God is to us than our fears! You must not have an anxious thought for me. God can restrain the passions of evil men, and keep my faith in Himself. And then, humanly speaking, we have so much protection as British subjects. It is such a comfort to feel it is not my weakness and faithlessness that has to be relied upon, but the upholding hand of my Almighty loving Father. If the work be true and beginning to gain a foothold we must have opposition."

"On Monday, in consequence of a mullá having taken 'Khánum doctor farangi' ('the European lady doctor') as his text the previous day, a number of women who had heard the sermon came to see me. Apparently he was a little doubtful whether I am the incarnation of the evil one, or only one of his

agents! We read and talked from 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., when they came to the conclusion that the Gospel was a good book—'from seeming evil still educing good.'"

"All was quiet and pleasant in town, though the mullás have also been preaching bitterly against me in the big mosque, Musjid-i-Shah, and telling the people not to admit me to their houses. So many women coming here had attracted attention, and spies informed the head mullá in town, who also issued an order forbidding any to come to see me, as they thought I was a Bábi, and taught the women to be so. For ten days only a few ventured, in the early morning or at noon, when they thought the spy would be sleeping; then some of the husbands took up the matter, and represented it was a false report. Since then we have been undisturbed though still watched."

"On Tuesday I set off for the town dispensary in accordance with the message I had received inviting me to return, but we found the doors locked and a few turbanned friends awaiting us; they were perfectly civil to me personally, but they had nailed up my dispensary door, and locked the street door. The men answered all my questions civilly, and we wished each other a friendly good-bye. My man said as I rode down the street that the mullás regretted that I was not afraid of them, and feared that my talking pleasantly was enough to draw the women over to Christianity. Then I went visiting, and the mullá sent his

servant to watch where I went, but nothing was said. The people gave me a warm welcome, but were frightened."

"Last Monday a formal complaint was laid against the *Kád Khudá*, head man of the village, for having come on my roof and tried to frighten my patients away, there being a strict Persian rule about people not looking into their neighbours' compounds. This was written out, sealed and forwarded to the 'Pillar of the Kingdom,' who replied denying the charge altogether, and saying he was sorry that the word of one weak woman was believed rather than that of one hundred men. The charge was repeated, and to-day has been denied again. 'It never was or will be done,' was the answer, which is considered most favourable, for it shows they know they were in the wrong and are afraid. On Wednesday, when reaching the dispensary street, the women surrounded me, begging me to doctor them in the street. I said it was impossible—I had no medicine—and invited them to the dispensary. Outside the door no one was visible, but as I stepped into the passage an almost nude fiendish-looking man rose and put up his arms to prevent my entering. 'Who can forbid my entering my own house? This is my house.' His arms dropped and I passed. Two women, seeing this, made a rush to get in; the man, who proved to be the Kad Khudá's servant, struck one in the chest; the other struck him between the eyes. He staggered, six other women leapt forward and swept him

against the wall, and about twenty-five rushed in shouting, 'Bravo! Bravo!' You ask if such little scenes unnerve me. Not in the least; in fact this wicked wild Tabbie often feels more inclined to laugh than anything else."

"Last Saturday, when leaving Husainabád, the Kad Khudá told me not to come again, as the mullás had had a meeting and determined to give me the bastinado—sticks—next time I came. One man threw a spade down in front of me, evidently to make me jump. I could hardly help smiling as I stepped over the handle, it was so childish."

"On Wednesday the Kad Khudá of Julfa and a policeman stood in the street close to the dispensary door, and told the women the *mujtahids* had forbidden their coming, as I wanted to make them Christians. When the women still tried to enter they beat them with a donkey's chain (a chain with a prod at the end, which is used instead of a whip in this land). Nevertheless, sixty-four women struggled past and were so attentive. They seemed struck by the different results of our religion. Perhaps this is God's way of opening their eyes to the truth. The Kad Khudá of Husainabád came himself on Tuesday, saying he was sorry I was insulted there before, it was all his fault, and would I come and see a sick relative? I have been twice and all was quiet, but he advised my not going to other houses for fear of a row!

"Thursday. Went to the town dispensary, followed by my two men. All was perfectly quiet,

thank God, both there and on the road. The bridge-keeper gave me a piece of lilac, saying, 'Welcome back to town!' We hear the civil governor of the town, under the Prince, has sent a message to the head man of the district, in which the dispensary stands, to say he is to see that no one speaks rudely to me."

Yet, such is the treachery of the Oriental, within a week the following happened:—

"Tuesday. One hundred and two patients in Julfa made a busy morning for us. All had just gone when a friendly Jew appeared saying that my town dispensary was to be locked, I was not to be admitted, but, possibly, beaten. Bishop Stuart[1] and I agreed it would be best to go, as otherwise how could we tell it was true? and for them to think a rumour would prevent us coming would be enough to teach them to do such things. So next day I started. On the bridge we met friendly Jews, who said, 'Don't go, the mullás are waiting for you.' Farther on, several friendly people hinted at a storm, and one could see sayyids and mullás were on the look-out along the road. I had promised to visit a woman with acute rheumatic fever at the first house in the dispensary street. Here news was more definite—'a crowd waiting, the door locked, students headed by mullá sticks.' I asked the men if they would go with me? 'Oh, yes.' We remounted, and went forward. The bend in the street prevented our seeing till close at hand;

[1] Bishop Stuart resigned the see of Waiapu, New Zealand, in order to devote his life to work among Moslems.

then, in the middle of the narrow street, under an archway, I saw the Kad Khudá's three servants, who had always done their best to help me; they looked quite kindly at me, and then followed close behind my own men. All was just as we had heard: two big padlocks on the door. 'Knock at the door.' 'You shall not defile the door,' and some sayyids came forward to prevent our getting near. I salaamed and inquired, 'Who has done this? Who has issued the orders?' 'The inhabitants of the district.' 'All the inhabitants of the district would hardly come to lock one door—who has done it?' Laughter, and the same reply. The men asked whether I would try to force my way in through the stable. This was not locked, but it was strongly guarded, and I saw it would be folly, and useless to attempt it. Of course some bad language was used; twice sticks were raised, but not one blow struck. There was no use in waiting. 'Turn back!' 'No, we will drive her back.' With the customary farewell, 'God watch over you,' I turned—I had never realized so much the beauty of the words. He was there watching, protecting us, yearning over His lost sheep. The crowd followed threateningly, and thanking God that they had turned the infidel out of the district. Then, I am ashamed to own it, I was afraid. I saw the crowd had pushed between my men and me, and I could not see them. I tried to turn, but the students held my donkey's head, and I feared they were going to wreak their vengeance on the men; but in a moment the

crowd separated and they came forward. Afterwards they said they had not been insulted, only a message had been given them for me that I was not dismissed for that day only, but for ever—a bold statement! I like to think that God holds the key of my dispensary and can open or shut it just as He sees best, and no mullá can prevent Him. To-day the mullás think they have won, but ours is the victory, certain, complete."

Dr. D. W. Carr, writing at this time, said :—

"The chief mullá sent once or twice to the owner of the house in which the dispensary is held saying that he would send men to kill him and pull down the house if he allowed us to come any more. It was thereupon represented to the governor of the city that he had given permission a week or two before for the work to go on, and the threatened interference came to nothing. Threatenings have been frequent, but we have been allowed to go on. Seed is being sown, the ground is being prepared, hearts are being softened, bigotry is being broken down, prejudice is disarmed. Many come to us to stay for a longer or a shorter time, then pass away from us, some we believe with the seed of eternal life beginning to germinate and spring up in their hearts, and most, at any rate, with a more kindly feeling towards Christianity, which may pave the way to better things."

In 1897 there was trouble again, but this time it was because one here and another there had confessed their faith in Christ, and the suffering fell

on them as well as on those who had taught them. But this, as before, only brought larger and wider opportunities, until to-day the members of the visible Church, gathered out from among the Mohammedans of Persia, may be numbered by hundreds. It is even now likely that opposition from the mullás and their students may have to be faced from time to time. Yet hospitals and schools will hold their own, not only because the cause is God's, but because the Persians put a high value upon medical work, and appreciate sound moral training for their children. These no Mohammedan country can produce, and it is for the lack of them that they are so far behind in the race for progress and power.

Blesséd Spirit, lift Thy standard, pour Thy grace and shed Thy light!
Lift the veil and loose the fetter; come with new and quickening might;
Make the desert places blossom, shower Thy sevenfold gifts abroad;
Make Thy servants wise and steadfast, valiant for the truth of God.

F. R. HAVERGAL.

CHAPTER VI

"Khánum Maryam," the Friend of the Persians

MARY BIRD went very far towards meeting the people of Persia, but she never lost her individuality; though she conceded nothing of all that goes to make a truly English gentlewoman, she saw things, as it were, through Eastern eyes, and as little as possible let the people feel that she was "foreign." For while the Eastern delights in a *tamáshá* or a show, and his curiosity is one of his strongest traits, he does not love what is foreign. But the Persians loved Mary Bird, or, as they put it, they "had a friend" in her. One who knew her well calls her "the most beloved woman in southern Persia." To a certain extent her own character and personality account for this, but this character and personality had to be adjusted both by divine and human means to be able to respond in the marvellous way it did to what was racially alien and personally uncongenial. Among the Persians, Khánum Maryam's name became a household word, and the title is now often used by the uneducated of any woman missionary.

Her work was "all round"—it was for body, mind, and soul. Her genuine, loving sympathy, the result of a clear understanding of all their

disabilities, attracted them. Khánum Maryam never looked down upon them, and they realized it. She saw things at their native value, and was invariably ready to respond, if at all possible, to any demand of theirs at any time, however unreasonable it would seem to an ordinary European. She knew them intimately, understood their language of signs and all their colloquialisms, and unconsciously became their friend.

> Blending their souls' sublimest needs
> With talks of every day.

To her, too, Christianity was Christ—the simplicity of her faith was constantly requisitioning His power to work in the hearts of the people, and through her as a channel. As with the disciples, who lived with their Master and were continuously and unconsciously moulded by Him, so Mary Bird was in an unusual degree in a line with the divine will because she followed so closely with the Christ, and her life was one in which "wide, sweet spaces were kept, where holy thoughts passed up and down," and as the need arose the help was hers. In spite of her busy days, time was always found for public prayer and worship—a thing which counts for much in the opinion of the Oriental. Another trait appreciated by the Persians was her courtesy; to really win their hearts you must be patient enough to be always courteous. She often bemoaned her lack of patience, but she had more of this necessary Eastern possession than most.

Khánum Maryam's own words explain better than any others how and why she became a friend to the people of Persia. She wrote in 1892 :—

"In the spring I gradually made friends with a good many Persian women living in Julfa and the two neighbouring villages, they coming to see me and inviting me to their houses. These women have such sad, dreadful lives, and are so ignorant; several have told me, 'Our husbands say we have no souls.' One wonders where to begin. I tried telling the little girls about Jesus blessing children, and soon the mothers were listening. One weary woman said, 'It is pretty, and it rests one to hear about it.' St. Matt. xi. 28 seemed just for her, she said. 'I will try to think of this when everything goes wrong.'"

"Stayed in to receive a Marnoon visitor, but the spy had spoken roughly to her in the street, and asked what she was coming for, and frightened her so much that she was trembling from head to foot and would not sit down. 'Kiss me, I won't come again for a year, but I will think about you.' However, to-day, just before prayers, she arrived with a neighbour with bad eyes, and was so attentive. This woman rebukes me; she is so ugly that at first I felt set against her; and now, when the soft gleam comes into her eyes, I can see there is a fine jewel inside."

"I have been busy making up the attendances at the dispensary. How many of these thousands have seen even a dim light shining, a faint reflection

of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, when they have come? Too often I fear that my impatience, if they have been noisy, may have been a stumbling-block. Have I been a faithful, loving friend? God grant that amid the deadening influence of hourly contact with sin, our manner and actions, which are noted and credited much more than our words, may be only always for God's glory."

"As soon as the mirza left (after a good rating from 'little Turk' for being late—half an hour) I went to see the typhoid child and others, in Marnoon, and then to Husainabád to two diphtheria cases, back to find that the mirza had arrived, meek as a mouse, to read another hour if I liked! I felt idle, but was ashamed to own it, so we ground away. Preparing medicines took till 3 o'clock, when the people came for tea and the working party. When they left at 5.30 I had twelve little Persians from this street to a melon feast, and a talk about the pictures in my room."

When staying in a village which travellers call the Switzerland of Persia, Khánum Maryam chose a small downstairs room, so that the women might come to her more easily. She wrote:—

"In the morning about twenty patients came in, and a good many friendly women, whom we tried to teach. We had just had our midday meal, and I had begun to write, when my door opened and the woman of the house came in with fourteen friends. 'Are you reading your prayers? If you will read aloud, we will listen.' And they did listen

for nearly an hour, when some forty patients came in to be seen and taught."

Her love and sympathy for the people in no way blinded her to their faults; and her keen sense of humour and powers of observation were of the greatest help.

"News came that the Persian general's Khánum and nine friends were coming to see me. They were only an hour and a half late! They enjoyed blanc mange with jam, sweets, fruit, and cake. Most of them took two slices at once, but one managed better, for she helped herself to the uncut half of the cake! It was the first time they had been to a Christian's house; one counted her beads all the time; the rest were willing for a short Gospel talk. Ten men-servants came with them, who also had to have tea. When they left at 4 p.m., N. went with me to Sechoon to graft skin on the big wound on the boy's leg. The relatives were quite willing so long as it was my skin! Now don't fancy it hurt me; N. only took six tiny, tiny scraps off my arm—I am sure she felt doing it much more than I felt the pain. She has a loving, sensitive nature, and I am a bit of old shoe-leather; and, besides, she was not prepared for a room full of curious spectators, and it made her nervous."

"To-day my first visit was to the wife of the Imám Jum'ah. Of all the vain, frivolous, selfish women I have seen, she beats them all. She is now 24 years old, has had four husbands and seven

children, boasts that she does not let her present husband go to see his three other wives, has had them turned out of all the good rooms, and their dowries reduced! She was gorgeous in pale pink tights, crimson velvet jacket, and short skirt worked in gold, pink muslin head-kerchief, rose silk house chadar, and sat between two mirrors to admire herself. She gave me lunch—rice, plain and savoury, chicken stewed with plums, very greasy soup, melon, cheese, and bitter herbs. Afterwards we retired to a small room alone to talk. After listening for a few minutes, she said, 'Yes, true, you need not trouble about salvation; God willing, the Prophet and Imáms will arrange for us one way or another.' Poor thing! From there to the house of the Mushíru'l Mulk. He was the richest and most popular man in the town formerly; but the prince became jealous of him, and plundered him of most of his property. He died a painful, unaccountable death shortly after; the widow whispers, 'Poison, I fancy.' She is a very clever, staunch Moslem, with more reasoning power than most, and we had a long talk. St. Matt. vii. 16 and 20 struck her much, and we parted good friends. 'We must have another talk,' she said."

The following extracts from her letters give some incidents in Khánum Maryam's intercourse with one family. Whether in Isfahan, Yezd, or Kerman, she always had friendly relations with the aristocracy, whom she found more difficult to reach

than the poor, but whom she understood equally well.

"I had a visit from the Zan-i-javad Agha and her sister, attended by two negro slaves, ten Turkish slaves, and ten Persian servants—rather impressive to see them all standing at attention round the room! Her husband is one of the Prince's household. She, the lady, is a typical Persian beauty, very fat, soft skin, large eyes, plenty of colour, and good hair. She is almost as broad as long, and well adorned, gold Qur'án boxes set with emeralds, bracelets, rings, necklaces, earrings, and very handsome anklets; green and purple plush coat worked in gold, covered with a crimson plush chadar. She is nice, not bigoted, and is reading the gospel I gave her, though at present she only looks upon it as an interesting book."

Some months later this lady's little boy died, and Miss Bird, with a good deal of labour, wrote a Persian letter to her. It would have been easy to let the mirza write one with all the correct Persian phrases, but she knew that her personal expression of sympathy would give more comfort. A fortnight later she wrote:—

"Last Wednesday, when in town, this lady invited me to lunch. I gladly accepted, as I had started early, and did not expect to get back till 7 p.m. What do you think we had? Served on beautiful silver trays, with a large English bath-towel for a cloth spread on the floor, Turkish delight and other sweets, small cold boiled potatoes, pepper and salt, iced

lump sugar and water, apple juice and rose-water, pomegranate juice and rose-water, iced lemon juice and tea! The thing seemed to be to eat a sweet and a potato alternately, the potatoes being handed with sugar-tongs by negro slaves. The daughter is to be married in a week, and they most kindly invited me for the five days and nights of the feast, but I have declined! The bride is to have for her dowry 1000 tomans (about £262), ten changes of raiment, two negress slaves, and all the cushions, quilts, mirrors, candlesticks, and *samovars* she needs. She is just 12 years old, such a timid, clinging sort of child. One of the slaves is only 8 years old. She was smuggled up-country three years ago, and sold for £26. This is a good price; an older woman goes for much less. We had no reading, but a nice talk, and a pressing invitation to the wedding. The wedding-day came, and, as promised, I went. Thirty-two relatives were there, all very smart in rose silk house chadars, velvet and silk jackets and skirts, oh! so short! and tights! Many had very handsome jewels, and were well rouged and painted. Timbrels and tom-toms kept up a lively noise, and a girl danced. The orders were that the dancer was to be fully dressed not to shock my feelings, but, as it is a vulgar performance, I never watch, to show my disapproval. The poor bride had a dull time sitting in a little room apart, as the company are not supposed to see her till an hour before she leaves her home. I asked to see her, and had a nice talk with her

and prayer. She asked what English brides did, and then said tearfully, 'No one has prayed or asked God to bless me; perhaps I shall not have one blessing.' She was charmed with her gospel, and sent her slave off at once to lock it in her own box. Then came lunch—piled-up dishes of plain boiled rice, curry, chicken, savoury rice, boiled lamb's head, soup, meat and plums stewed together, cheese, lettuce, pickles, melon, and iced sherbets. No plates, but flat cakes of bread instead, and fingers instead of forks, knives, or spoons. Everyone takes a handful out of the dish, but I wait to be helped for fear I should defile the whole.

"It was difficult to get much conversation on religious subjects. The rich are, I think, more shameless than the poor, and it is dreadful to hear them talk. Of course I would not join in such conversation. After a time they asked why I was silent. When I told them of Phil. iv. 3, and the last six Commandments, they said, 'That is good, but what can you talk about?'

"At 1.30 I left and went to call on the Princess Jallal, having obtained a promise that the Prince would not enter the anderún whilst I was there. She had heard of my English saddle, but had never seen one, so I called Musá to bring my donkey to the door of the anderún, and then led it in and mounted the Princess. These women are just like children, so pleased with a new trifle, and sometimes I find it breaks the ice and makes them glad to receive me."

A fellow missionary writes:—

"The gates of the city of Kerman were shut at sunset, and none could get through save those who knew the password for the night. One evening Miss Bird had been sent for to attend a small child who had been badly burnt. She set out immediately on her little donkey, with her man-servant by her side. How would his Khánum Maryam get through the shut gates of the city? At the entrance the word was promptly given: 'Let her through, she is the friend of the little Mohammedan children,' said the gate-keeper."

Her own letters show how true this was:—

"There is such a pet of a child at the hospital, not quite 2 years old. When I dress a bad wound on the mother's arm, the child comes and holds the arm, saying, in baby Persian: 'Mammie, do not be afraid.' Then she runs and hides, and calls: 'Where is my Khánum, where?' Then she climbs on my knee or back, and clings on while I do other dressings. Children don't worry me now a bit."

"My dear burnt baby died yesterday; the wound was nearly well, but the child had no strength to battle with measles and fever. The mother came at 11.30, saying it was much worse. I went as soon as my patients left, and it died with its hand in mine a few minutes after I arrived. Oh, the haste is dreadful. The little limbs were straightened, wrapped in a chadar and carried on a little mattress at once to the *jube* (stream) to

be washed, when it would be wrapped in cotton-wool and camphor, and buried within an hour. I must go this afternoon to see the mother, a very nice woman."

"Near the Maidan, Julfa, where the only son had died, the mother was weeping, and roughly throwing about her baby girl, who she wishes would die, poor little pet! She snuggled up so closely when I took her; I longed to bring her away."

As Khánum Maryam understood the Persian point of view, she never hurt their susceptibilities, or gave offence to the people.

"I went for a walk to the fields, for being Thursday the Moslem women had all been to pray at the *Imám zádeh* or shrine, and so many came and wanted to talk, that I went with them to a quiet part of the field and sat down. On the way back I went to see the relatives of the poor woman who died on Tuesday evening. They were all seated round the room wailing, beating their breasts and tearing their hair and clothes, whilst a professional reader, a woman, read a sort of service, calling on them to 'weep for their dead sister.' 'Weep, weep for a child of the family of the prophet who is dead—weep for a spirit, a stranger in another land.' As soon as there was a pause, I said: 'Surely the believers in a true God were not like the heathen, without hope?' and I had an attentive audience as I tried to tell of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life."

"Accidentally we came upon a large gathering

for a weeping service; there was no other way to my patient's house, but the people were so nice. I would not let my servants call, 'Take your foot away,' but explained to a man at the edge of the crowd what had happened. When he heard I had come three miles to see a poor patient, he said, 'I will get you through.' He walked ahead, whispering to the people to make way. When we returned the service was over, but I saw my friend and thanked him, and again apologized for interrupting. Several mullás were near, and said that not having spoken aloud we had not defiled their prayers, and then expressed surprise that Christians should look after patients who could not pay."

"To-night is the Shah's birthday, in honour of whom we have burnt up nearly all our stock of candles! I mentioned him specially at prayers, which seemed greatly to surprise the women. 'It's our Shah Násru'd Din she is praying for, not her own!' 'Are you sure hers has not the same name?' 'No, it's a woman over there.'"

On a journey she wrote:—

"This afternoon I was talking with my men about their families, their homes, and the journey. I don't want them to think I have no interest in them. The muleteer seems a bigoted man, and at present I have not been able to do more than interest him in the account of English ways, and give a few object lessons as we go along; but yesterday he was more friendly, and listened when I was talking to the others about prayer. Both

Aratoon's friends are village Armenians, and are so terribly ignorant of the Gospel; I trust that we may be able to help them a little during the journey. Yesterday an Ilyát lad, who only speaks Turkish, joined us, and I found by speaking slowly I could make him understand. I began on the two roads, old and new, and then asked him if he knew of the two roads in this world. For an hour and a half he walked beside me, asking me to tell him again and again of the roads, until at last he mastered the main points, and learnt a brief summary by heart, which he promised he would repeat to his villagers, and took a tract as a present for his mullá."

Mary Bird recognized few limitations in her work for others. Hot sun or deep mud were nothing to her—meal hours mattered still less. She would eat in a native house, and, if necessary, sleep for a few minutes, and be ready to go on again. She would send her fellow-workers to lunch, but not go herself until she had seen the last of a big dispensary. She said some engines required less fuel than others.

"Wednesday.—To town. I hired a donkey for Musá, so we went along gaily. About five inches of snow had fallen in the night, and it snowed all the way, but not heavily. The sick people gave me a very warm welcome, and in every house listened willingly to the Gospel. At the Imam Jum'ah's they said: 'We discussed this morning if you would

come, and the Imám said, "If it is possible she will—those Christians think it so wrong to tell a lie."' I was so glad I had gone; before I came away they gave me money to buy a *lahaf*, or padded quilt, for a very poor woman I had told them of last week. This is the first time a wealthy Persian has given me anything for the poor. The people are always extra willing to listen on wet days, looking upon it as a proof of the goodness of our religion that it makes us willing to go out on disagreeable days."

During her last year in Julfa, 1897, she is reported, during a time of special stress, to have "worked nineteen hours a day"! One with whom she lived says that during her last year she practically slept one minute out of every five, and worked the other four, night and day! Often instead of going to bed, she would sit up with a bright light, so that after a short rest she could continue her work, writing or sewing or studying. A new missionary going to Persia was told by a member of the home Committee, "You are going to have a fellow-worker who does the work of six men and lives on biscuits and eggs. Don't copy her!" If Mary Bird had taken more care of "Brother Body" she might have worked longer. Latterly it took two men on foot to relieve each other and keep up with her during a day's visiting in town. Truly she "held not her life as of any account, as dear unto herself."

Yet much of the secret of her detachment and

consequent power was her appreciation of existing conditions. She writes: "I love and am wholly absorbed in the work, and very happy in it, only longing to serve better. The other morning when I was riding to town, I was wondering if any of the other Europeans have so much enjoyment in their lives as I have. My work, which I thoroughly enjoy, is never wearisome; I have loving friends both in England and here; plenty of variety; I receive longer and far more interesting letters than any one I know; I have good health; and only too great an aptitude for hammering fun out of everything; and oh! such countless mercies."

During a severe epidemic of diphtheria she took it badly herself, and seemed surprised to think that the people cared for her as she cared for them. She said: "Fancy the Khan, whose wife and mother I go to teach, coming last night to inquire for me, and bringing such loving messages from them!" And again: "Fancy two townspeople have sent purposely to inquire for me, and so many of the poor things from the new villages come every morning; the men are weary of answering the door. Have they really grasped the idea, I am *their* friend?" And she continued to be "their friend" all through her years of loving service for them, but to the end felt that she was still "their debtor."

Teach what I owe to man below,
And to Thyself in Heaven?

H. F. LYTE.

CHAPTER VII

The Attitude of the Persians to "Khánum Maryam"

THE love that desires to spend itself for others always realizes that it is a debtor to the world, while the love that desires to be loved will always find the world in its debt, and will complain bitterly of the unpaid score. Mary Bird was one of those who always felt her debt to the world. She did not love in order to receive but to give. Yet, not asked for, not sought for, love came back to her, and she was loved. Mary Bird never looked for approbation, but it came; the people loved her, they thronged her, they believed in her. This was not easy; she was a foreigner, she was only a woman, she was physically weak and frail; but as far as possible the wall of partition was ignored; men believed in her, she was outwardly fearless, and brought comfort and strength to many. Love is a faith, and it calls out much that is best in others. It is the love and kindness of human hearts, given often unconsciously, through which the divine love comes home to men.

Kindliness of heart may not be the most brilliant or beneficial of human qualities; some look upon it as a dowdy virtue, but it is the greatest of human qualities in friendship; in

fellow-feeling for mankind it is the least dispensable quality. It has the great advantage of always going with a broad mind. Narrow-minded people seldom appear kind hearted; their view point is straight in front, they cannot, or will not, look to the right and the left. If not inborn, kindliness of heart is difficult though not impossible to inculcate, but with Mary Bird, as with so many of her clan, she came into the world endowed with a broad mind and a broad outlook. A friend said that on this account she was not cut out for married life and its details; be this as it may, she had mother instincts which the Persians were quick to appreciate and appropriate.

The reader may think that it can scarcely be right to conclude that the Persians looked upon Khánum Maryam as a friend, if the foregoing accounts of opposition are true. If the reception given to Mrs. Bishop the traveller by Isfahanis in 1890 [1] is compared with what her cousin encountered in the following years, it will be seen how the attitude of the people improved.

At a time when there was much opposition in Isfahan, Mary Bird was asked to call on the wife of one of the mullás who had shown himself violently opposed to Christianity. This lady presided at the samovar, and poured out tea, a cup being handed by a servant to her guest. The latter, however, observed that her hostess did not herself take any tea. Something seemed to warn her of danger, and

[1] See Vol. I, p. 247, "Persia and Kurdistan."

she bethought herself of the Persian custom of asking any one remarkable for holiness to bless the cup by taking the first sip. This compliment she paid to her hostess, and an awkward pause ensued, during which she turned and examined some of the pictures on the walls. At last the hostess said to her servant: "Take away this tea, it is quite cold, and bring me another teapot." The teapot was brought, fresh tea made, and hostess and visitor each had a cup. Mary Bird eventually withdrew after a prolonged visit, without having shown the least sign of alarm. A negro servant who followed her to the door of the house whispered to her in the passage, "How did you know that it was poisoned?" The habitual coolness which she exhibited in danger was the result of her faith, and made a strong impression.

Persians showed their affection by wishing her to become a Moslem, or, as many put it, "return to the true faith." They said: "You were born a Mohammedan, but as your parents were Christians they brought you up to be the same." About this, she wrote:—

"At a mullá's house on Thursday the mullá was walking in the compound, I sitting with his wives in a curtained room. He called: 'Ask the Khánum if I shall pray for her that she may soon become a true Mohammedan?' The head wife looked at me. 'Say I shall be truly grateful if he will pray that I may be enabled to serve God

aright.' Mullá, in a disconcerted tone: 'What answer can we give to that?' One woman said she prayed every night that I might become a good Mohammedan."

"Spent all day in town, visiting in thirteen houses. In nearly all I found many siek friends and neighbours. There is an impression among the people that there is to be more religious liberty, and no one seemed afraid of my reading the Gospel. One dear old woman said, 'I am so sorry for you; my heart boils for you that you are in darkness, and do not know the true Prophet.'"

"Saturday.—The week has flown! Never have I known so mueh liberty, the people salaam in the streets! men will show me the way. If one says, 'Why do you trouble about the infidel dog?' they reply, 'She is doing a good work, perhaps she will believe presently!'"

The people also showed their love for Khánum Maryam by small personal attentions, and by appreciating hers for them.

"The longed-for rain came on Monday night, turned to snow on Tuesday morning, and again to rain later on. Supporting myself with a stick, I waded through the slippery mud and water to see seven bad cases. One house was down a passage under one of the shops in the brass bazar; the water had accumulated and was over my ankles. When I had dressed the poor woman's boils and was coming out I found the waterway had been opened, and the passage was comparatively dry.

My man told me that the men in the bazar had said, if a foreigner would come down to see a Moslem on such a day they would not let her walk through water, so they had opened the choked-up drain. I was very much surprised and gratified, as in every town the brass-workers are considered the roughest class; but God can turn the hearts of all."

"7 a.m.—To town for sick visiting. Some of the typhoid cases have got a turn for the better. Every one very friendly, and many glad to listen. One former patient had invited me to meet a friend at her house, and 'bring the Gospel.' I found the room beautifully cleaned, and an elaborate pattern of real pink roses all down the centre of the floor. The neighbours who came in were surprised, some rather shocked, at the attention to a Christian!"

"A woman from the next house to that where there had been some disturbance came to see me. She kissed me, saying, 'Khánum, did they frighten you? I heard all, but dared not come out. You said God and Jesus were always with you. Did They keep you from being afraid?' And then she asked me to come and see her, which was a very bold step, seeing her house is between the one where the disturbance was and the mullá's who caused it."

"Did I tell you poor old Guli, the one who used to carry letters for me, sent me about half a stone of dried sultanas and apricots? She was quite sure those to be had in Isfahan were not so good as

those in her village, so walked there and back, forty miles, on purpose to get them. Was it not touching?"

"The people are so kind in Kerman. The other morning I was hobbling up to the hospital—my ankle being inflamed and swollen—when a shopkeeper mounted on a beautiful white donkey passed me. He drew up, jumped off, and asked my servant if I were going to the hospital. 'Yes.' 'Then your Khánum must ride my donkey; tell her it is hers this morning.' I accepted, but said I was ashamed to be the cause of his walking. 'That does not matter,' he answered. 'You are going for God's sake to doctor sick people.' I am so glad some begin to see the reason of our work. I have been so touched by the welcome granted me and the numbers of all classes that greet me in the street. Truly it is wonderful how God has put it into the hearts of these people to receive a poor little stranger."

"Lately I have been greatly cheered by the quiet attention of many, even some of the Parsis really listen, and speak of me as their friend, and greet me in the street; truly a trifling thing in itself, but it marks a difference. At first, like most downtrodden people, they expected to be cheated and not get their turn, and fought for it; now, though not perfect, they are quite amenable, and are becoming much more friendly. The wife of the high priest came with bad rheumatism the other day, but she could only have some liniment, as she has never been permitted to defile herself with

medicine not prepared by her own people; the other Parsis were most surprised at her coming at all."

Another incident which shows how much Miss Bird was appreciated is told by Dr. Stileman, the first Anglican bishop in Persia. In December, 1913, he was calling upon the acting Governor of Kerman. The latter had just received a letter telling him that Miss Bird was coming from Yezd to work in his town. He asked, "Can you tell me who Miss Bird is?" The Bishop replied that the Persians always called her "Khánum Maryam." The Governor's face lighted up immediately and he said, "Oh, is Khánum Maryam coming back to Kerman? That is excellent news; rich and poor alike will give her a warm welcome. She loves them all and they all love her." It was a remarkable testimony from a man who probably knew the people of Kerman better than any one else.

This attitude of friendliness was shown wherever she went, and people constantly asked her to come and see them "as a friend, not as a doctor." Thus she wrote:—

"This week has been busy and interesting, I have been invited to several houses where there were no invalids merely for friendly visits, and in most cases found them very willing to listen to the Gospel story, though sometimes not caring for reading. I think many of them are like children, and find it easier both to understand and attend when spoken to without a book."

"Wednesday.—All day in town; bitterly cold

outside, but some warm welcomes, more than balancing any slight discomforts. At the sayyid's house, where they used to be such bitter enemies, they asked for reading and were so attentive. In some of the houses found quite a number assembled for reading, not doctoring, and several asked for gospels for their boys to read. One said, 'If we heard four words every day from your book we should soon learn, it is so plain, not like what our mullás read.' The people at T—— seem either very bigoted or very friendly; some of the sayyids warned the people we had come to take them from the true faith, but a man replied, 'It is evident that if the Christian religion is bad, the Christians have more mercy than we have; *we* would not wash scrofulous wounds.' Nothing more was said. Truly the life speaks louder than words; how I need wisdom, love, tact, and patience!"

"Out all to-day visiting sick and well, having lunch at one of the houses—bread, eggs lightly boiled, broken up in a saucer and sprinkled with sugar, lettuce, and pickles. I tried to eat the two former neatly with my fingers, and one woman who considers herself my special friend kept taking pieces in her fingers, holding them out to me, and saying, 'Eat it from my hand,' adding, 'I washed my hands this morning.' I am glad she told me, for I am so dense that I do not think the fact would have dawned upon me! In every house but one the people were willing for prayer and reading, often asking if I had brought the Gospel;

of course, this is generally mere curiosity, but people must hear before they can believe."

"To-day I went to see the Princess in her garden. She was very gracious this time, even sipping some coffee and then handing it to me, a mark of friendship to show there was no poison in it. The Prince's band had been sent out; it was quite a treat; they really play very well. The laughing chorus was too comical, instead of laughing they say, 'Ha, ha, ha,' in a solemn funereal manner! The Princess gave me no opportunity of talking about religion, but I hope prejudice is giving way."

"Thirteen ladies came for the Bible class this week, and four nurses with young babies. They were mostly of a higher class, titled ladies, and one a princess; though I really love the poor best, I realize the much greater power of influence of the rich, and, that seeing them come, makes the poor much less afraid to do so."

"Last Monday we were invited by a wealthy merchant's wife, who has been coming to me at the dispensary for treatment, to visit her. I found a gay company of ladies to meet us. I had just had an interesting Gospel talk with three of them when the wife of the chief of the tax-gatherers asked me to examine her eyes. She is considered the greatest lady in town, having been the wife of Shah Ali for one day! and several of her daughters have married princes. She is very tall, slight, clever, rather sarcastic, and dignified, but on the two occasions when I have met her she has

been most friendly. Another interesting lady was there, so gentle and sad. She listened willingly, and invited me to her own house, saying, 'My own religion has brought me no happiness; if there is happiness in yours I will listen.' On Thursday I went and had such a good time reading and talking to her, and am to go again in a fortnight."

"It is strange that among my list to be visited this week are Turkish, Jewish, Arab, and Bahâi ladies. The Jews have been keeping the Feasts of Trumpets and of Tabernacles. Some of them make booths of willow branches on the flat roofs, others in the compounds, and some roof in the compounds with willows. On Tuesday morning I was invited by one who has been my patient for long, and found all her relatives waiting to receive me, men and women, as Jews do not live apart. We talked of the institution of their feasts, and they did not resent it when I told them of the one great difference in our religion—our joy in the one perfect sacrifice of Christ. One man especially struck me; he followed the prophecies so eagerly and owned 'how much Christ fulfilled.'"

"I have paid several social visits this week, the first was to a wealthy Arab family. The ladies were most friendly, taking us into the orange house, opening out of which is a *Rúza Khání*. The ladies asked a good many questions and invited us to come again before long. On Wednesday called on the governor's wife, who was very

friendly, feeding us on fresh dates, and, what is considered a new delicacy, the pith of the crown of the palm tree. I fear the governor is not likely to remain after the spring; we shall be sorry, for he is an unusually good, just man. The Khánum asked if it were true that I prayed with the sick people every morning; she has never read the Gospel, but the governor has. She asked me why I had come to Persia, and if I had your consent. Your willingness struck her very much. The next afternoon we called on the wife of the *Farash Báshí* (head of the police). They, too, are Teheranis and belong to this governor's retinue. The wife is very unhappy and lonely; she told us as a rule the inhabitants of any town who wanted to be intimate with the governor's party did not call on the retinue, so as to show their superiority. This seemed to make our visit the more acceptable, and I hope she will be allowed to come and see us; she is a very pretty girl of 15, and most affectionate. She cannot read, and pines for her mother."

Eastern men have little to do with European women, but Persian men of all classes treated Khánum Maryam in an unusual way, taking opportunities of listening to and arguing with her, and entrusting their women folk to her. We see this in the following extracts :—

"We started from Kashan in glorious moonlight at 11.30 p.m., riding first about ten miles across

the plain, and then uphill, but nothing really steep till daybreak, by which time we were at the foot of the Kuhrúd Mountains, and were climbing up till at 8.30 a.m. we reached the village. At Kashan it was as hot as an August day, and at Kuhrúd there was still snow in the streets. My old muleteer, Ahmad Agha, met us as we entered the village, and said he would come to see me at the caravanserai. He came, and had a Bible lesson; he still declares his faith in Christ, and seems bolder than before, begging for books which he said his boy could read. He invited me to go to his house, where I found a room full of people. After seeing the sick ones, all were quite ready to listen, and later a number visited me at the caravanserai, and another set came at 5.45 a.m. next morning, for an hour before we started, and this we used to consider a very bigoted village!"

"The sister-in-law of the Rukn'-ul-Mulk (Pillar of the Kingdom) being ill, a servant was sent for me. About half way to town he suddenly turned round. 'Do you know me? I used to be sent to keep women out of your dispensary, in Der Dasht, now I am to bring you for our lady. Strange! strange!' Returning we had a long talk about religion at his own request. He said, 'I always thought you had no proofs for your religion, but you have; only show me what your faith *does*. You do not believe in works of supererogation, or pilgrimages, your faith does nothing.' I told of love, mercy, truth, purity. He said, 'We

talk of these but have not got them, that is a very strong proof.' "

"I went to visit some of the old Sechūn friends. While sitting in one house a reader at the mosque who used to be a bigoted enemy came in, was most polite, and began to speak of religion, but not bitterly as formerly. After telling him, and the women who were present, a good deal of our Lord's life and work, he said if I would give him a Bible he would promise to read it. I gladly sent one, as he asked, after dark. He is an intelligent man, with a great deal of influence in Sechūn."

"The people were most friendly and so ready to listen, even asking for the Gospel. From 2 p.m. till 9.45 p.m. I had a succession of visitors, the last being a wealthy woman whose husband had allowed her to come and see me after dark so that no one might know."

"After English service I went to read to Nejif Ali and his wife. His father had died that morning, and according to Persian custom he would have remained at the house to wail. Instead he made an excuse that he had business in town, and raced round by the town back to his own house (about five miles and a half) in time for the reading. We read St. John xii. He seemed so eager, and is anxious for his wife to learn too."

"Yesterday I was called to see an old Isfahani patient who was lately married to a Yezdi merchant. She is very miserable here and wondered how I could be happy, which gave a good opportunity for

a talk and reading, to which evidently the husband was listening through the curtained door, for suddenly he said, 'Ask your friend to let me have that book.' It was the Gospel of St. John. When he saw it he was disappointed and said, 'It is the whole gospel I want,' so I have promised him one."

"On Saturday my one guard recognized me and addressed me by name, telling me he had constantly read the gospel I had given him ten years before, and that now he is reading it to ten of his friends and would like teaching; so I begged Bishop Stileman to try and see him."

"I was invited to the house of a Kerman merchant on Wednesday and found the people so friendly, and most anxious to know our reasons for leaving home and coming here. They said, 'Yours cannot be a bad religion; tell us about it,' and for two hours I tried to answer their questions. When discussing whether we ought to read the Bible, I gave a Persian translation of passages from the Qur'án, where Mohammed speaks of the Bible as being a light and a guide. They acknowledged that though several of them had read the Qur'án in Arabic, they did not understand its meaning, and one added, 'That is the worst of you Christians, you explain your Book so that people must understand.' I was so glad."

"The husband of my erysipelas lady now asks me to read for them; I think he is the most interested. It is such a surprise to him to find the Gospel was written by eye-witnesses; he had

thought it was compiled like their own book of traditions. The husband and uncle are both reading. One day we had a talk on our Lord's divinity, and the non-divinity of all other prophets; while willing to admit the former they seemed to take almost a Bahâi view, 'that the same spirit and light has been incarnate in all the prophets."

Children were specially drawn to Khánum Maryam, and during a holiday she wrote :—

" I spend till nearly sunset in the village, and then try to meet the shepherdesses and spend the last half hour before dusk sitting on the ground close to the fold. Most of the people here are very poor, only owning five or six sheep or goats, which their daughters take out every day to the mountain side. I had been telling these little girls of God's love one evening, and the next morning one of them ran into the dispensary to ask if God was still loving her, or whether He only loved at night. Sometimes a few women returning from their reaping join us, and seem quite as ignorant as their daughters; they are very affectionate. I trust some of them will learn to love and trust God, they know so little of their own religion. Unless controversial subjects are started, I try to avoid them, and leave the truth itself to cast out the falsehoods."

" A large party arrived ' only to hear the Book.' The Lost Sheep is a favourite story; they see it pictured every day, and so have little difficulty

in following it. I asked a little girl, who is a shepherdess, what they did if a lamb fell or was hurt. At once she put up both hands as if carrying a lamb round her neck and holding its feet to prevent it falling and said, 'We carry it on our own shoulders, and pet it,' moving her head as she spoke as if rubbing it against the lamb, and then turned her face and kissed. It was a perfect illustration."

Mary Bird did much to break down prejudice, and the following story, told by a lady travelling in Persia, is a touching picture of the attitude of the people to her :—

"I remember, when going with her through the bazar, the crowd that came round asking for advice and visits. She rode a tiny little donkey, and though she was a timid rider she never showed it. . . . My muleteer, a great stalwart fellow, over six feet, was tramping alongside me on the march, and said to me, 'Do you know the Khánum Maryam?' I replied in the affirmative. 'There is but one Khánum Maryam,' he said, 'and she is an angel that came down from heaven.' The hot rare tears sprang into my eyes at the man's simple appreciation."

The present attitude of the Persians to all missionaries is one of strong confidence and appreciation.

> The moon of Mahomet
> Arose, and it shall set :
> While blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon
> The Cross leads generations on.
>
> P. B. SHELLEY.

CHAPTER VIII

Mary Bird as a "Doctor"

IN Asia Minor in the early centuries of this era, women were celebrated for their medical knowledge, and tradition says St. Zenais and St. Philonilla, natives of Tarsus in Cilicia and kinswomen of St. Paul, devoted themselves to medical science, making their skill in curing the maladies of the body a vehicle for instructing the souls of their patients.

In England for centuries women practised medicine among women and children. This was largely done by the members of religious orders, who, however, gradually withdrew from this side of their work. For a time, with rare exceptions, home was woman's only sphere, but in the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a great intellectual awakening, and women of singular power came forward as pioneers in education, nursing, and medicine. Conditions then changed extraordinarily; women were admitted into the medical profession in this country; and the doors to practice, though slowly and cautiously, were opened both at home and abroad—a step which has meant much to humanity.

How remarkable it is that a land celebrated for its ancient civilization, its poetry, and its philosophy, should have so little knowledge of the

science and practice of medicine. The need of suffering humanity is so great and so urgent that it seems almost incredible that there has been so little effort made to meet this need. It would almost seem as though some essential germ of life or of wisdom had been missing from Persia's development. True it has those who profess to be doctors, but their knowledge, their theories, and their treatment leave very much to be desired. The conditions of life in Eastern towns where the people know nothing of the laws of sanitation and hygiene, cause the health records to be very bad, in spite of the fact that, owing to the absence of machinery and traffic, accidents are much fewer than in the West. The rate of infant mortality in Persia is appalling, in some districts being over eighty per cent, while few reach really old age. Not only is there little knowledge of medicine, but what is worse, distorted ideas of it prevail; and the women are neither willing nor are they allowed to see men doctors from abroad.

The conditions of the country, permeated with ignorance and superstition about things medical, make the need of skilful doctors appalling. The results of accidents are often intensified by neglect, by dirt, or by the application of extraordinary plasters. Cases of small-pox, typhoid, typhus, whooping cough, and eye disease are very common, as are also serious burns. The terrible results from cramped position, bad atmosphere, poverty, and overwork on the poor little carpet weavers are

pathetic. Opium smoking is responsible for a great deal of evil and suffering. Mad people are constantly met with, and their condition seems often to correspond with that of the demoniacs in the time of Christ. Native doctors or hakíms, with the exception of a few trained in Western methods, have no knowledge whatever of surgery, and as a class are very greedy of gain. The following are specimens of native treatment, some of which do no harm, even if they do no good.

For fever, a charm paper may be bought, torn up, mixed with iced water, and given to the patient to drink. A wound may be filled with peas to keep it open. For rheumatism the diet is a teacupful of honey, without bread, and soup made of lentils, beetroot, barley flour, mint, asparagus, and plenty of vinegar. For a dog bite, some hair of the same animal is singed, and the ashes sprinkled on the wound. For a burn, the ashes of a piece of calico dyed with indigo, or an ointment composed of pomegranate juice, white of egg, and gunpowder, are applied on a piece of rag, or brown paper, which need not be clean.

All diseases, all foods, and all remedies are divided into hot and cold; hot diseases always being treated with cold remedies and cold foods, and the reverse. Persians are appreciative when the foreign doctor considers their prejudices!

It was conditions such as these that Mary Bird faced when she went to Persia, but her life had been a simple home life; she had not been considered

strong enough to take up nursing or medicine before going abroad, and hence she found herself confronted by difficulties with which it might be thought she was not able to cope. But with her, to see a difficulty was to strain every nerve to overcome it, and so it came about that seeing the needs of Persian women she could but set herself the task of helping them in this special way.

There are people who have a negative creed, a clause of which very often is, "I don't believe in foreign Missions." But many even of these people will acknowledge that they do believe in medical missions. Be this as it may, it is beyond dispute that medical missions have been for many years a most powerful factor in heathen and Mohammedan lands. Facts very clearly prove this—the millions of patients visiting dispensaries and hospitals; the distances, often hundreds of miles, from which they come; their gratitude for the skill and kindness of doctors and nurses; and the numbers to whom this has been the first step on the way to finding the Christ, *the* Healer of body and soul.

Bishop Stileman tells how, in the spring after Miss Bird came to Persia, she went with the Rev. Dr. Bruce and his daughter to a number of villages near Isfahan. On their return Dr. Bruce told him with delight and enthusiasm that the riddle of Miss Bird's work had been solved. Day after day the women and children had crowded the tent for treatment, and had listened attentively to simple Gospel talks. From that time onward it was evident

that, although without any professional qualifications, she would be practically a medical missionary. She sent home for medical books and often spent many hours in study when others were sleeping. The first nurse sent anywhere by the C.M.S. did not go out until 1890, and no C.M.S. medical woman went abroad until 1895, so that Mary Bird's work was really pioneer medical work by and for *women*.

Some may think that to treat patients on any large scale was a great risk for an unqualified woman to take. Perhaps the most satisfactory answer to the objection is to quote what fully qualified doctors and nurses, the first five of these men, thought of her work in this respect.

1.—"Without much technical training, but with great natural gifts, . . . would have risen high in the profession had she been trained. Most successful in her dispensary work, fully realizing her limitations and entirely to be trusted to know when to stop."

2.—"She was thoroughly capable as far as her knowledge went, . . . careful to refer all serious cases . . . and was a most loyal fellow worker."

3.—"If she had made medicine her profession, she would have been in the front rank of women doctors. She worked with me . . . and I had the very greatest admiration for her work as a 'doctor.'"

4.—"Miss Bird was a born doctor. I have often marvelled at her diagnosis; she seemed to know instinctively what remedies to give. She

treated me most skilfully when there was no doctor within a hundred and fifty miles."

5.—" She was very capable . . . and knew her own limitations, never attempting what she knew ought to be referred to a doctor."

6.—" Wonderfully gifted, though she had not had special training."

7.—" She was so gentle with the sick folk in the dispensary, so firm with their childish naughtiness, and so skilful and wise."

8.—" She was always modest as to her sphere, but courageous in acting on her experience. She always prayed for and with her patients. She undertook minor surgery, and had an intimate knowledge of native prejudices about medical treatment."

9.—" As a medical worker (untrained) she had no equal, and she was always very careful to draw attention to the fact that she was not trained."

10.—" She was so wise in using the knowledge she had, but at the same time so willing and anxious to get further advice in difficult cases that she felt to be beyond her powers."

Instances could be multiplied to show the confidence that she inspired in lay people, and how often she was asked by Europeans to undertake serious cases in the absence of a doctor.

From very small beginnings the name of " Hakím Maryam " became widely known in Isfahan and the country round. So influential did she become, as has been seen in a previous chapter, that the mullás

forbade the people to come to her, and attempts were even made to poison her. But she went on with quiet courage; when one dispensary was closed she opened another, and the general result was steady progress. She fully demonstrated the fact that such work was possible among Mohammedan women, and also that it was warmly welcomed by them. She longed for the advent of a fully qualified medical woman, who would be able to give the much needed surgical aid. When Dr. Emmeline Stuart reached Persia in 1897 to do this, Miss Bird's joy was great. Her pioneering work in Isfahan was then finished, and she willingly moved on, after her furlough, to do work of a similar character and of equal value, first in Yezd and then in Kerman.

Bishop Stuart wrote in 1895 :—

"The attendance of patients at Miss Bird's residence in Julfa on two days a week has continued throughout the year with few interruptions. Many of the patients come from a distance on mules and donkeys, from the villages as well as the city. The long line of these, which on dispensary days half block the street, is evidence of the eager demand for her medical work. She has also her days for visiting in the city, and not infrequently she has been sent for, even by leading mullás, when the shadow of sickness has fallen on their own homes."

The following extracts from Miss Bird's letters will give some idea of what was expected from her and what she attempted :—

"When you are writing to Isabella (Mrs. Bishop)

do tell her how much I appreciated her remark about what '*not* to attempt' in doctoring, and to refuse all operations, except simple cases of lancing abscesses, boils, etc. Often I would be glad not to undertake bad cases; but what can I do when they say, 'If you will not try to help us, we must just die'? I feel, after warning them, I must try, but sometimes it is impossible. Fancy one poor woman after being blind for six years, came and entreated me to give her sight! Another asked if I could cure her husband who had been mad for three years."

"In the summer my hours are as follows: We begin dispensary, or go out visiting, at 6 a.m.; back to read Persian with the mirza from 11.30 to 2 p.m.; do odds-and-ends and have tea till 3.30, and then go out again sick visiting and receiving visitors till 7.45 dinner." Those who lived with her would say till 9 or 10! "The thermometer is at 80° in my bedroom all day, but it does not feel hot."

"This has been a busy day. In the middle of dispensary a messenger came post-haste from town from the wife of a big Khán for me to come instantly. My donkey led the way, trotting, cantering, or galloping, and kicking whenever it came near the splendid grey horse, on which the head man-servant of the anderún rode with the head woman-servant sitting behind. It was nervous work, the patient's mother, two Teheran princesses who are here on a visit, two of the Prince's wives, another Isfahan princess, and two of her sisters-in-law were all

present to criticize my doctoring and speaking! But they were nice, and we had a little talk and prayer before leaving. I fancy fresh air, exercise, and a little variety of interest would do more for the patient than medicine, but how is it to be attained? The husband gives leave for her to go to the *hammám*, public bath, about once in ten days, and occasionally to call on a relative. She cannot read. I don't know how these women can be as cheerful as they are with such hopeless, aimless lives."

"I was called to visit an Armenian house and heard that the whole family had the same illness, and, worse still, discovered none of the women knew Persian! The principal patient spoke quietly at first, but, thinking more volume of sound must penetrate farther into my dull brain, gradually raised her voice; then the friends came to the rescue and joined in loud chorus. I came to the conclusion that at least their lungs were not seriously affected. Query:—Ought it to be more difficult to doctor, or rather quack, an adult patient whose language one cannot understand, than a child who cannot describe its symptoms?"

"The same happy thought seems to have struck several people, i.e. that if they have their bad teeth extracted this week they will be better able to eat sweets at their New Year festivities. On Monday, 165 patients, and eighteen of them unkindly wished to have stumps taken out. I was kept busy, the Armenian assistants doing the

dressings. Yesterday thirty women arrived at 6.15 a.m. and I began at once; but 218 patients with fourteen dental extractions kept us hard at work till after 2.0 p.m. I broke two teeth, but, after several attempts, succeeded in getting out the stumps. These people are Spartans, they never utter a sound. My last visit to extract a big double tooth for a lady by her husband's order, but against her own will, was an exception. She was terrified and fled round the rooms and garden pursued by her mother, mother-in-law, boy, and maids for an hour and a half before she gave in! Afterwards she was smiling, and so grateful that she loaded me with sweets. A report is abroad that I want to collect teeth for sets, so I carefully give every one I extract to its owner! It is taken away, washed with water and camphor, and placed in a hole in a wall where the sun will fall on it, so that the patient will not be toothless in the next world!"

"Last week a dervish's daughter asked me to meet her visitors. When I arrived I found twenty-two sufferers collected. The girl said, 'Sit quiet while the hakím prays; she is not an infidel, she always prays first, then sees her patients.'"

"Sewed up a woman's ear which had been torn by her ear-ring being violently pulled by her fellow-wife while fighting—a common accident."

"Yezd is 3800 feet above sea level, Isfahan and Kerman both about 5500 feet; and there are mountain villages at an elevation of 8000 feet.

Consequently many of the people have heart affections, and no remedies with which to relieve them. The poor sufferers' great consolation is the thought that when they become very dropsical, they are full of wind, which will waft them up to heaven!"

"This is the first week of the sacred fasting month Ramazán. I am careful to tell patients to take their medicines at sunset after the fast is over, and at dawn after their meal, but before the fast begins."

"A village woman was brought in a basket on a donkey over a bad mountain road for three days. She had heart murmur and bronchitis. She had never seen a foreigner, and almost choked herself in her desire to ask how we ate, slept, married, and were buried!"

"I was very surprised to be sent for by a lady whose people are 'Moslems of the Moslems,' 'sayyids on all sides.' She has had a long illness, and been treated by hakíms, dervishes, and soothsayers. It is stated that one took many devils out of her, and the mother added with a sigh, 'took much money too.' I could hardly keep from laughing. Now the young hakím, who still has my Persian Bible, has advised my being 'sent for and obeyed'! The 'devilish wind' in her leg and foot proved to be two large abscesses. Her relief was great when I lanced and dressed them."

When there was a doctor to work with, Miss

Bird was practically "house surgeon." At Kerman in 1903 she wrote :—

"Really the way the doctor works is splendid. We rarely leave the hospital for lunch till 2.30 or 3, and then off to town visiting for hours. We neither of us heed the locking of the gates as they are opened at once for us. Two nights it was 11.30 p.m. and still the gate-keepers did not grumble. It would be impossible to continue at this speed, but alas! the doctor leaves us in a fortnight and is trying to do all in his power before leaving."

"Last Monday at 12 o'clock a closed carriage and pair, four outriders, and six runners came to the hospital doors. The doctor and I drove in state to a distant entrance of the city and then came to a full-stop. Outriders dismounted, coachmen jumped down, horses were taken out, runners ran up, and we were drawn the next two streets and a half as the corners could not be rounded in any other way. Again the horses were put in and we started afresh, three times they swerved slightly and the carriage stuck against two houses and had to be pulled off. Then we ran into an open shop, upsetting baskets full of walnuts, but we finally arrived at the door of the most influential mullá in town. We were received by his brothers and sons and numbers of the leading Kháns, and led to a room specially prepared for the operation, where operating table and instruments were ready and a hospital assistant in charge.

The doctor found the table was too long to be set in the angle of the room, where the light was best, so there was a delay till the end was sawn off, during which time he asked me to cheer up the Áqá, who was evidently nervous though self-contained. Then all but the eldest brother and his own hakím were asked to leave the room. The cataract came out most beautifully. As soon as the doctor said, 'The operation is over,' the poor Áqá said, 'Send word to the anderún; my wife is killing herself.' So I went to the anderún, where the wildest excitement prevailed. The wife had torn her skirt and chadar to ribbons. The room was packed with relatives all telling her at the top of their voices 'to be quiet,' not to let herself 'boil.' They flew upon me, and every one asked questions at the same time without leaving a chance of getting in an answer. I began in a loud, cheery tone to the wife, 'May your eyes be enlightened. The operation has, thank God, been most successful. Have you been shown the cataract?' Then lunch was announced. The doctor, assistant, two of the Áqá's brothers, his two sons, three Kháns, and I all sat down together. Such a thing has never been thought of before."

A fortnight later she wrote, "Again, poor little Quack is, 'medical in charge,' for the good Dr. Summerhayes left us on Tuesday for his own hospital in Quetta amid the regrets and good wishes of all classes."

Sick children made a very strong appeal to Miss Bird, especially the poor little deformed carpet weavers at Kerman. In that town opium-smoking parents make contracts for their children with master carpet weavers, taking money in advance if they can. So little girls of 5, 6, or 7 are bound for periods of one or two years, working daily from soon after sunrise till about sunset, in dark, ill-ventilated, dirty, mud hovels, at the hand carpet looms. At one time girls never worked outside their own homes, but the poor opium smokers allow their children to go in all weathers, scantily and unsuitably fed and clad. When through extreme weakness and deformity the little ones cannot walk, they are carried to and fro daily until the contract term is up. Then perhaps, one morning they are deposited at the hospital doors for treatment as in-patients. Village girls, employed as carpet weavers under hygienic conditions, are not deformed; but, alas! opium smoking is spreading in the villages and deformed children carpet weavers are increasing in number.

Writing of these children Miss Bird said :—

"One case is a child of 12 years old. She was married five years ago, and last year she had a baby boy. For four months she has been crippled; forty days ago her baby died, and the husband, not wanting 'a childless, crippled wife,' divorced her. She is only a child, and calls me as soon as I go into the house to pet her."

"I have just admitted a child of 7, I think

suffering from starvation fever. She is so weak, but quite conscious, and says nothing but, 'cold water,' and, 'let me lie still.' Her mother is dead, her father has left her. She had been sent to weave when 5, but broke down utterly three months ago, but as she was bound for three years, and her grandparents had drawn all her wages in advance the master would not let her off, and her aunt carried her daily to the factory. Too weak to speak, dear wee mite, she is lying gently stroking her turkey-red pillow."

"We have in hospital this week two very bad cases of rickets. Laila, said to be 15, cannot stand; the bones look as if they had been broken below the knees the curve is so acute, and the knees and ankles are bent. Fátima, aged 10, is such a pretty child, with dark curling eyelashes and perfectly transparent skin. She has just the same form of double curvature of the legs as Laila, and the muscles are much contracted. Both are orphan children whom I saw literally crawling along in the mud begging, as they could no longer work."

Of other children she wrote:—

"A poor baby with an awfully ulcerated lip and tongue was brought for me to look at. They had ground some stones to powder and with water made a paste of it, which when applied plentifully simply glued up the poor child's mouth."

"I had fourteen children to dress to-day. The gratitude of the mothers is touching. I forbid

their kissing my feet, but cannot prevent their kissing my hands in the middle of the dressings. At present I have three children who have been burnt by going too near the lamp on the ground and setting fire to their skirts. Poor mites! it will be weeks before they are well. One is a Nawab's daughter, aged 4, and is brought by her three nurses every morning. This gives an opportunity of teaching them, and the mother sent on Wednesday for me to go to the house, and was most polite and friendly. I am going every day to dress a child with awful wounds in her side and leg. We are fast friends and she will let me do anything with her, but cannot bear her own people to come near. I remarked on it the other day, when she said, 'Mother does not love or want me, she wishes me dead.' When I appealed to the mother she said, 'Yes, I have three other girls, that is as many as I can get good husbands for. I often tell the child I wish she would die."

"A poor boy came to me to-day who had had his hand crushed between millstones, the sinews and bone are bare. He is plucky! I told him it would be best to cut off some of the skin. It was in an awful state; he had only wrapped a handkerchief loosely round it, and the flies had got in, and it was alive! This often happens with wounds in summer. He had walked twelve miles to see if I would dress it, and said, 'Put a chadar over my eyes so that I do not see a knife or scissors, I will try not to scream.' He only groaned a little. This morning it is in

rather a better state. I often long for a surgeon to dress such cases properly."

"Our dear little Baluchi patient is doing well; he is now carried out to lie in the sun every day, the height of bliss to any native. His diet would perhaps surprise English hospital authorities. We tried him with eggs and milky custard, but they did not suit him; so he lives now chiefly on dates, and broth almost 'stodgy' with rice, with spinach and plenty of fat in it."

"A Persian woman brought her son of 16, who has had ear-ache for a week. This morning they saw a 'beast' coming out of his ear which they tried to catch with the scissors, but it went back! They went to the hospital to find the doctor had gone. Would I look at him? I could not see anything, but filled his ear with oil, and after a few minutes saw something white which I extracted with the forceps, and found it was a stone just the shape and size of a large scarlet runner bean. They have gone off very happy."

"A dear, pretty bride, 10 years old, with lovely, beseeching, frightened brown eyes, had been tossed by a bull, her mother explained, when 4 years old. 'Ever since then her heart has flapped, flapped, like a dove's wings.' A week ago she was married to a man of about 40, whom of course she had never seen. His loud voice terrified her, and all the fuss and row of the wedding proved too much and brought on bad heart attacks. We were soon friends, and I have promised to take all

your photos for her, 'for if I love you, I must know all your family.' Poor darling, I hope she will soon be relieved."

"Then to a new case—a bride 11 years old. She had small-pox some years ago, and since then has been troubled with pains in her limbs, which the hakím said was 'the cold wind of small-pox.' Various remedies were tried with little effect. Her bridegroom, finding she was suffering, wished her to consult her hakím again, when he said the thing to drive out this wind was for the patient to have a fright and then a very hot drink. So when she was asleep her friends made a decoction of herbs very hot, and then standing round screamed, 'Your mother and sisters are dead,' and at once forced her to drink the mixture. For a week she had been gasping for breath, unable to lie down, and the 'wind had gone into the face, hands, and feet,' which were very swollen. I found she had organic disease of the heart, and of course the shock had done her great harm, but I hear she is rallying."

Village crowds always appealed to Maryam Khánum. After a long weary desert journey, her tiredness was gone as soon as those who needed her appeared. She said:—

"We pitched our tent under some willow trees near a brook outside Isfahan, and within five minutes were beset by women begging for medicines. Later, we went up a hill and to another small village, where one woman recognized me, and raised

the cry of 'Hakím,' and quickly a crying crowd of maimed and sick people followed us."

"The openings for work seem plentiful in the villages round Yezd. At Taft over two hundred patients, men and women, came; and we paid several visits to big houses where they were willing for prayer and reading. In fact we had only just entered one house when one of the family said to the neighbours who had crowded in, 'Be quiet, the ladies will read and pray before they see any one.' Most patients expect me to pray for and with them, and attribute many cures to this practice, though some repeat their Arabic prayers in a low monotone as an antidote. I know to reckon by numbers is a most insidious evil, but one cannot but rejoice that so many have been willing to come."

Opium is smoked throughout Persia, but the habit is worse in Kerman than anywhere else, and is greatly on the increase. There are few houses where opium pipes are not seen. The women smoke in their own houses only, but the men sit in groups under some shady archway, or in unfrequented parts of the bazars smoking away quite shamelessly, and it is openly done in all the coffee-houses. The following are examples of what Miss Bird met with, and the help she was able to give to the victims of this drug:—

"What is it possible for us to do to hinder this curse? Five times lately women have entreated

me, if I knew of any antidote, to give it them for their husbands; one of these, when I was visiting at his house, came to the door of the room to beg for help against this besetting sin: 'My wife and mother are starving, we are in rags, everything that could be sold or pawned has long since gone to satisfy this craving. I must smoke, I cannot endure the suffering if I give it up for a day, but I know it is killing me. My friend dropped dead in the road only a few days ago, because he could not get his pipe at the right hour; I shall do so too. Give me medicine, or if you think God hears a Christian's prayer sooner, pray for me. I know opium is killing me, I want to give it up, but cannot.' A mother came sobbing, 'My pretty daughter whom you attended two years ago now smokes. Khánum, save her life, her beauty is gone!'"

"An opium smoker, who has recovered powers of sleep and eating is only taking a quarter of his usual quantity, and is very anxious to give that up. The poor creature looks like a wizened, wooden old monkey, but I believe is only twenty-two. Everything had been sold to obtain the drug, which he said was killing him. I saw another poor victim, a black skeleton would best describe him, and he is quite young. He wants to give it up, he says he knows it is fast killing him, but 'I cannot, I shall go mad or die if I don't smoke.'"

"A call to an opium poisoning case has meant three and three-quarter hours' hard work to recover the bride, but I think all danger is over; she is

a mullá's daughter and one is glad to serve in such houses."

Again in 1914, when efforts were being made by the local authorities to discourage opium smoking through raising the tax on it:—

"Opium is being raised £2 per-*stone* weight; the old smokers are in despair and say it spells death to them, they cannot get their quantity; four I believe really did die the first night of the rise, March 25. Many wealthy smokers count it a work of supererogation to give the poor smokers enough to keep them alive. The price is having a salutary effect on younger smokers; numbers are coming for treatment to give it up—a really painful process. Many husbands are forbidding their wives to give the smoke of it to their children, an order an opium-smoking wife bitterly resents, for even if an infant has had four or five long whiffs blown down its throat, it sleeps like the dead for hours."

"On Friday I saw a poor wretched woman leaning against the doorway, and called, 'What do you want?' She did not answer. As soon as I went near I knew by her contracted pupils that she had had a large quantity of opium. A shake roused her to some extent and she said, 'My child—opium.' Throwing back her chadar I found such a fine boy about a year old dying in her arms. I told her to run to the hospital, but finding she could hardly walk, Nasrullah took the child and we flew. Dr. S—— was there, and we tried all we could, but

in vain; the little pet died in my arms. The poor wretched mother took him, and slunk off looking frightened, not sorry. She had been smoking, sitting on the ground; the baby, she remembered, was playing with the pellets of opium; more she did not know. She died the next day, leaving three tiny children, all opium inhalers from birth."

"A woman who had smoked opium for years developed the signs of opium poisoning, her friend hearing I was in town called me in, and she recovered. The baby was a wee shrivelled up brown monkey, the mother wanted to blow opium in its face for it to inhale, but I first tried rubbing; however, it got weaker and worse, till fearing it would die I gave in and let it have opium, when it soon came round. Is it not dreadful? I have now four babies of about a year old under treatment, giving them tonics and coffee as a restorative if faint, and ordering them three whiffs less each day. A different case is poor Jan Jan, who has reduced herself to beggary through opium-smoking and eating. When I first saw her last autumn she had lost the use of her limbs almost entirely, and could not think for many minutes about anything; she was just a wreck. I have taken her medicine regularly since, as her people would not trouble to come for it. She can now walk, has quite given up opium smoking (and only takes three small opium pills per day), and can follow a simple Bible lesson for ten minutes at a time."

A fellow-worker writes :—

"Miss Bird was called at all hours of the day and night to visit the sick, and sometimes to cases of madness ; there are no lunatic asylums in Persia. Late one evening in Kerman she received an urgent message to come quickly to a poor *dívanéh* or devil-possessed woman. She found the patient chained in the desert, almost naked and very wild. Mary Bird went to her unafraid. She unchained her, stroked her, kissed her, clothed her, sat long beside her and prayed over her, believing simply that God would heal her. She gave medicines to her, and did not leave until the patient was calm and quiet. She went again and again to minister to her, and eventually this woman recovered fully, and the Persians marvelled at Khánum Maryam's skill and constantly attributed it to Christianity. There were many such cases treated by her. Though unqualified as a doctor she knew no fear, and had a special liking for treating neurotic and mental cases, many of whom fully recovered. There is no doubt that Mary Bird possessed in an unusual degree a mysterious power over people of this sort. There was an authority about her when she tended them, a love for them, however repulsive they appeared, and a great vital force went out from her to them, that impelled them into a state where healing could be possible. She knew she possessed this power, yet was reticent in speaking of it. Into these sad, dark experiences of human life she brought no mere occultism, but entered with her victorious faith knowing that

the Christ Himself was within her, ministering to them."

The following stories are from her own pen :—

"My poor mad girl is still in the stocks, but much quieter ; I hope, if only her people will have patience, she may recover, but they soon lose their tempers and then all fight together. She never swears at me now and does not destroy her clothes. Oh ! for an asylum where she would be treated kindly and watched properly. Last week some knowing friends called to see her and said she was possessed by several demons, and that something must be done to frighten them out of her, so they decocted a quantity of herbs, and when the poor girl was quietly sleeping, suddenly poured the hot decoction over her. Of course she was terrified and very angry, and for several days more excitable."

"Did I ever tell you the mad girl I attended for months has quite recovered ? I have another under treatment now, said to have been driven mad by having donkey's brains given her to eat."

"The woman who says she has an evil spirit came to the dispensary to-day. The people were scared, and she is, to say the least, 'uncanny,' but I was not frightened. She went up to the wall, made a snap at it, saying, 'That is sugar candy,' and instantly began crunching a large lump of plaster in her mouth. Then she came to my table, saying, 'Now I will tell you all about your mother and family.' Some one said : 'Where are her charms ?' I noticed them on the floor and put them into her

hand. She kissed them, saying, 'The evil spirit does not speak to me when I have my prayers on,' and was quiet. Dr. Bruce once said he had known several such cases, and thinks they answer exactly to the Biblical description of witches and possessed ones. Though I am only one of the little ones, as helpless as the lamb among the wolves, yet when the day comes to tell my Master of the work I may be able to tell of Kermani devils cast out in His name and by His power."

During the last three years and a half that Miss Bird was in Persia she did less hospital and dispensary work than in those early days, as now there are at work in Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman ten doctors and six nurses. She was willing, nay glad, to stand by and let her place in medical work be taken by doctors, so that she might have more leisure for teaching.

Apart from the multitudes in Persia who show their appreciation of the healing art by crowding to the doctors wherever they are to be found, there are other vastly encouraging facts. For instance, in Yezd in 1898 a large caravanserai and house were given by a wealthy Parsi merchant to be converted into a hospital, the legal papers all being settled and sealed by the mujtahids, according to the law of the country, and the deeds registered in the books of the British Consulate in Isfahan. Native governors often visit this and other C.M.S. hospitals and give generously for their upkeep.

Many wealthy men subscribe regularly, and as it means a great deal for a Persian to give and not to receive the equivalent, they must know their money is well spent. Land to the value of £80 has recently been given by three wealthy landowners for part of the site of a new hospital in Kerman.

In 1914 the Persian central Government so recognized the work of the Isfahan hospital as to remit, at the request of the native governor, all customs duties on drugs and instruments, by making an annual grant of £50. The leading people pay large fees; in fact, what might be called the private practice of the doctors largely pays for the upkeep of the hospitals,[1] with their thousands of patients.

Mrs. Isabella Bishop gave this emphatic testimony to the work of healing: "To my thinking, on no one agency for alleviating human suffering can one look with more unqualified satisfaction. The medical mission is the outcome of the living teaching of our faith. I have now visited such missions in many parts of the world, and never saw one which was not healing, helping, blessing; softening prejudices, diminishing suffering, telling in every work of love and of consecrated skill of the infinite compassion of Him Who came, 'not to destroy men's lives but to save them.'"

Though gratitude is not a feature of Persian character, and though abstract ideas rarely appeal to them, they do acknowledge that in doctoring

[1] About two-thirds of the working expenses of the hospitals, apart from drugs, are paid locally.

them we have no other wish or thought than their spiritual and material welfare.

Patients know that if they come to the dispensary they will hear a simple gospel address; that if they are admitted as patients into the hospital there will be the daily readings and talks in the wards for those who are well enough to listen, that there will be prayers at night, that besides the English doctors and nurses, many of the native nurses, dispensers, and ward-maids, men and women, are Christians; and yet they come. And many leave the hospitals with memories of Christian kindness and patience and love, all given "without money!" and with at least a clearer understanding than ever before of the love and teaching and power of the Christ. Medical work fails, from a missionary point of view, to justify its existence unless the evangelistic work is carried on as faithfully and vigorously as the medical and surgical work. In Persia it has certainly justified its existence.

The healing gift He lends to them
Who use it in His name;
The power that filled His garment's hem
Is evermore the same.

* * * * * *

The Good Physician liveth yet,
Thy Friend and Guide to be;
The Healer by Gennesaret
Shall walk the rounds with thee.

J. G. WHITTIER.

CHAPTER IX

Mary Bird as a "Teacher"

AS a "teacher" Mary Bird is seen at her best, but not as a trained educationist, nor as one who had made teaching a study; she was rather one who had something to tell, and who by the forceful appropriate adaptation of her message to her hearers attracted many. They were willing to listen, because they believed in her; able to understand, because of her comprehension of them and their needs. In this teaching she thought of their spiritual needs and grasped their mental limitations. At the same time she was well versed in controversy and knew how to meet objections. She was, more than anything else, missionary-hearted, and to tell the simple story of "Jesus and His love" was her highest joy. She reproved sin and its consequences, and deplored the darkness of the hearts of men, but more by holding forth the true Light than by seeking to make darkness visible. There was more in her teaching that was positive than negative. It was for building up, not for casting down. She had confidence in the prevailing power of her message, and people had confidence in her simple faith in an ever-present Saviour. She felt herself most at home in the pioneer work of talking to large audiences ignorant of the Gospel. She has been

known to say that teaching individuals was not her forte, though she often did it and excelled in it.

Mary Bird was "a great sower," and what she sowed others will reap. She was always on the alert to speak of holy things, was most apt in introducing such, and was so wise and tactful, so simple, definite, and clear, so truly taught of God in the message she gave. She was an extraordinarily adaptable woman, and could talk to mullás and "great ladies" as easily as to a crowd of villagers. Though she inherited this adaptable nature, it owed much of its versatility to training. All through her years in Persia she used every opportunity of learning the ways and thoughts of the people. It was not so much that it came easily to her to do all this, as that she had the "genius for taking pains." She was remarkable for bringing round ordinary conversation to spiritual things; at times she would stay an hour, or even two, in a house until it was possible to do so naturally. It might be a flower some one had given her, or a green leaf which she first admired, drawing attention to the beauty of the flower, or the life of the vine; or, perhaps, falling snow would make an opening. But she rarely left a house without giving some message about her Lord.

A Moslem land has such special needs and difficulties that to many they seem insurmountable, and nowhere is the need of the teaching and guiding of the Spirit of God more felt by those who teach.

Mary Bird's own pen best describes her aim and her work as a "teacher":—

"I have just returned from one of my prowls round Isfahan in the course of which I paid nine visits. Days are so short, one cannot do more, that is if one wants time for reading and teaching. A man said lately to Dr. J——, 'You pay much shorter visits than the lady doctor. Is it true she spends most of the time teaching?' Another man lately come from Teheran, asked which Khánum it was that they talked about in Teheran because she was always teaching. I am so glad the people are realizing what is our real object and work. I have met large numbers of women, and found them ready to listen. They call me 'the woman with the book.' While Moslem women are willing to listen and assent, often they have no idea of any 'way' of salvation but by faith in Mohammed, and very often at the close of an earnest talk they will turn and beg me to embrace their faith. They say that one who thinks and knows so much about the things of God must be pretty near the Kingdom, as they express it, i.e. Mohammedanism."

"There were twenty-seven women at service to-day, three of them were closely veiled the whole time. I had a very nice talk with them afterwards, but had no idea they were the wife and daughters of the head mullá in town."

"I visited (by request) four new houses, and had reading and prayers in each. They were all mullá people but were very pleasant and willing to listen."

"At dispensary to-day I had a hundred and sixteen patients. They were particularly quiet and nice, several who had been at first prayers waited for the second, which was very encouraging."

"Just as I was finishing the dressings ten village women came. I told them that it was the men's day, and asked if they had come far or could come again on Wednesday. They said they were staying in town for some of the Muharram weeping services, and so could easily come on Wednesday. The only one of the party who had been before asked if I had had prayers with the sick people, and was disappointed to find they were over; so I invited them to my little burnt Sakineh's room, and for an hour they listened to the story of Love so new to them."

"All through the past year the work has been making steady progress, more houses being opened not merely for medical work or out of curiosity to see a foreigner, but for teaching; and in the dispensary much greater attention is paid by all. Often those who have been before will tell newcomers, 'It is prayer-time, do not talk.' These women have such sad, dreadful lives, and are so ignorant. Several have told me, 'Our husbands say we have no souls.'"

"I was pleased when the mirza told me he had met some townswomen he knows, who had said, 'It was a very good book the lady read, we could understand it, and it was all true.' Since Good Friday we have found so many of the women eager to know why we had special services, that it

has given us splendid openings to tell of our Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection. At first they usually whisper to one another, 'He did not die, He descended from the Cross,' but the marvellous account commands attention, and few after hearing it have attempted to refute it."

"A most interesting visit was to a new house, to very wealthy people related to the Shah. The old lady told every one to be quiet while I read, and when a young princess objected, insisted on silence, saying she had heard that in the dispensary I told the women it was dishonouring to God if any one talked during the Bible-reading. How news flies, and what an added responsibility it gives to one's teaching. Ask that the Holy Spirit may daily teach me the messages He wants me to repeat."

"A woman who is a reader of services interests me much. She is always ready for a reading, and though she often listens for her neighbours and fits their caps for them, still she follows, and seems surprised and entranced by the Gospel story. 'I never read anything better than that,' is high praise from one who is supposed to be a good Moslem!"

"The little girl with the drawn-up leg, who was washed for burial, has quite recovered, and came with her grandmother to present me with nine loaves of lump sugar! All the family are so friendly, every time I go they want a Bible lesson; to-day they said, 'Promise now we have no invalid you will still come and read for us.'"

Mary Bird's power of adaptation is shown in the following :—

"Monday was the Moslem feast of sacrifice, when camels, sheep, or fowls are slain. One poor old woman I went to see was weeping because she had no sacrifice, so could not go to heaven. I tried to tell of a finished sacrifice and salvation, and she said, 'If it be true it is good news for me, but I never heard the mullá say so.' I had a talk with another woman on whether telling our troubles to Jesus or smoking the *kalyán* (water pipe) would soonest bring us consolation. It was piteous to hear her describe the soothing effects of smoke as the best, but when I granted it had some power to soothe, she listened at first carelessly, then eagerly to the news of a living, sympathizing, ever present Friend, able and willing to help. Later I went to see a child bride. All present were very friendly, and full of curiosity about our Queen, and what she does for the poor, leading to a few feeble words about the King of kings Who gives His rain and sunshine to all."

"I had such an interesting time at the house of the married daughter of the Imám Jum'ah. She was much better, so ten of her relatives had come to be treated, and after we had arrived at the end of their thousand ailments and fancies, I showed them the 'wordless book.' All the waiting-maids as well as the ladies clustered round me, and you might have heard a pin drop, and not an objection was raised."

"A woman came from the mullá's house to say his sister had burnt her hand and wanted to see me. The burn was nothing, just an excuse to send for me. The woman was very friendly, though slightly patronizing. Her boy of ten asked if I had a gospel. 'Yes, but you must ask your mother's leave before I give it you.' 'I am a *boy*, not a girl.' 'I know it, but without her leave you have no business to have it; God did not say *girls* obey your parents, but children.' I do not know which looked most surprised, but the boy was allowed to read aloud St. Luke xv."

"A woman at the dispensary asked how a bad vine could become a good one. I think she wanted to raise a laugh at my expense, as it was not in the subject. I said, 'God can easily do that, and if you like I will explain how.' The answers came from all round, Moslems and Parsis, 'Do, we can wait.' They quickly grasped and were interested in the idea of grafting, largely done here."

"In one house a very intelligent lady, discussing the difference between the state of England and Persia, said, 'Would that your King would come and take our country; then all would be right.' I told her I wanted Persia to have its own monarch, but also all the blessings we enjoy. 'Impossible,' was the cry all round the room. Then I told of England and how marvellously God has prospered us since we became a Christian nation, adding, 'God grant that soon your Shah and all your people may become Christian, then your land will be blest.'

An awful pause. Some ladies looked shocked, some half amused, and *the* lady, before whom none of the others dare say anything, said sadly, 'It can never be, we are in the dark.' I said, 'In Ps. cxix. 105, we are told of the lamp ready, will you not take it in your hand?' Again a look of eagerness and hope came into her face, and she listened while I told of the 'Light of the world, Jesus.' 'It is all good, good,' she said. This was the first time she had permitted a Gospel talk. I am so glad about it."

The Moslem is often struck by the differences between the teaching of Christianity and his own creed. For instance:—

"In several other houses this week the people have been extra willing to listen, contrasting the Gospel with their weeping services, and saying, 'Those (the latter) are a great meritorious work, but your Book tells of rest and joy.'"

"The dear village lady was reading St. Matt. vi., and was so struck by it. 'No other teacher ever gave such an order, to pray in *secret*; why, *we* choose the best-seen place.'"

"A leading Bahâi who has gone through much for the sake of his religion, and is evidently thoroughly in earnest, seemed so struck by the love of our religion, and entered fully into the parable of the Good Samaritan."

"In a town house the Áqá came in 'to welcome the new lady to Persia.' 'The grass withereth,'

struck him, and he said, 'True, this world is fading; it is just like a caravanserai, only a resting-place for a night, not an abiding place. The traveller must go on—but where?'"

"Had a talk with a widow about the Trinity in Unity, and the divine Sonship. The former she seemed to grasp, and did not resent the latter. 'Your faith makes you happy when your mother is not here; and you are not afraid of infection, or you would not doctor again. Our faith does not do this.'"

Mohammedans are permitted by the Qur'án to read the Bible, but the common belief is that our Scriptures have been abrogated. However, many are ready and willing to read for themselves, and nowadays this is increasingly done throughout Persia. The following are a few out of many cases in Miss Bird's experience:—

"At one house the husband was present. When I knelt to pray with his wife he knelt too, saying, 'Yes, pray,' and afterwards told me he was reading the Gospel, and saw and had no doubt that Jesus Christ was the Way, the Truth, the Giver of life everlasting, not for the body only but for the soul—'I have no doubt of the existence of a soul. These last few nights what should I have done without that Book; I must read more, more.' It was getting late, but I returned so glad, that I hardly felt tired."

"Sunday. Twenty visitors appeared at 5.45 a.m., and stayed for an hour's lesson, then one came to

take me to her house where she had invited her own friends to hear the Gospel! and in five other houses which I visited they expected me to read and teach them. One was a Khán's wife and wealthy, whose husband wanted a whole Bible, which I have sent to him. I have given by request on the journey from Julfa to Yezd, four testaments, twenty-four gospels, fifty tracts, twenty-four simple theological books, and my own Bible and Prayer Book!"

"Lately so many have asked for gospels and been willing to hear them read. Last Sunday the women from the Prince's anderún could not come to church as there were visitors, but they sent a boy to ask for another gospel, as the one I had given before had been carried off by the eldest son to the men's apartments, and they did not think it safe to be seen carrying it backwards and forwards."

"One villager who had begged for a gospel last week came back for medicine and 'a whole Gospel (New Testament)—we have read this.' Five others begged for single gospels to take for their sons or husbands to read. A note was brought in, carefully sealed in three places, saying that the two writers were longing for testaments, but were afraid to come for them—would I give them to the bearer of this note for the sake of Him Who said, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,' etc."

The following extracts show the simple Gospel teaching which Khánum Maryam gave to the

women, and of the way in which it appealed to them :—

"Forty-six patients, our subject Blind Bartimæus —blind eyes or blind hearts ?"

"Zacchæus was our subject. The idea of a rich man taking so much trouble struck them. 'The rich like things easy and comfortable, the poor must "run."' Wasn't it a good comment ?"

"Fifty-eight patients, subject: Touched or thronged ? Rest for time and eternity from sin and suffering if we touch Jesus by faith. 'Rest is what we want,' all exclaimed, and listened well."

"Eight women came to class. Nicodemus was our subject, and one that excited deep interest, his difficulties being so like theirs."

"Seventeen women came for class and we had a very nice hour. They were so struck by St. Matt. v. 12 to end. 'That was written for us.' 'Not to swear! Why, we swear even when we know it is not right, to gain a *pul* (i.e. $\frac{1}{8}$th of 1d.).' 'Women only to be divorced for sin ? not for childlessness or ugliness ?'"

"Nineteen members of the Bible class came, and twenty other women. My little Persian room was crowded, and I had to stand to command my audience, who were most attentive. Our subject was, 'Who will, and who will not be heirs of heaven ?' St. Matt. v. 1–12 ; Rev. xxi. 27. Many seemed to think the followers of the true prophet must be saved *en masse*."

"The other morning they almost made me smile.

I was telling of Christ in the Temple with the doctors, yet, in obedience to His parents, returning home; the women vigorously poked their children. When I endeavoured to show we all were children in the great God's sight and must obey Him, the children returned the home thrust!"

"The lady of the house, who had a tremendous fight with her children to make them sit down at all, when she heard our Lord's command for the multitude to sit down, which was obeyed, exclaimed: 'See the power of the Prophet! He could make five thousand men, and women and children without number sit down at once.' The miracle of the feeding seemed nothing as compared with this!"

"One woman said in the dispensary, 'We want salvation but have no money to go on pilgrimage.' A *free* salvation was more than she could believe. 'Good, good, but is it true?' she asked. I think many of these ignorant ones who love and trust up to their light will be saved, even though now they do not enter into the full joy of believers. Our Father knows that their sins are so often 'of ignorance,' but oh, how they increase our responsibility! A sayyid from Isfahan is preaching vigorously against our work, or any intercourse with Europeans. At present his word seems to be having no effect, and the Yezdis seem rather annoyed at an Isfahani daring to scold them. May God use him to stir up a spirit of inquiry rather than opposition; and yet I think it is best for the inquirers to realize what confessing Christ is almost sure to mean. Our

subject for the Bible class to-day was the death of John the Baptist. All were very solemn over it, some of them evidently understanding the similar risk for any faithful witness among themselves."

Although Miss Bird could scarcely be called a scholar, she had a most valuable and workable knowledge of the Mohammedan controversy. Village women seldom argue, but educated townswomen do, and she constantly talked with them, and with men who had a great regard for her. While knowing that her message must be God-given, she felt the duty of being able to answer them, a knowledge only gained by study and by understanding the native mind. About this she wrote :—

" At their own request I answer questions on differences of creed, the Trinity, Christ the only Mediator, where we Christians rank Ali and Mohammed, etc. I was sent for to the biggest mullá's house. An old lady, extremely well-versed in Moslem arguments, attacked me on the Divinity of Our Lord and the Trinity. I tried to keep calm and declare the whole truth, but the fact that the mullá himself was sitting behind the curtain listening to every word, made me nervous. Would some indiscreet word of mine make him hinder or stop our work ? Before leaving I suggested we should each pray that God would cast out all wrong from our hearts and reveal His truth to us. The mullá said, ' Yes, good, good.' "

"To-day the Dastgird women were here for three hours. They had brought a friend, who combated every statement, bringing up their favourite objections against Christ's divine Sonship, His death, and Resurrection. But when briefly I told the story of the Crucifixion and of our Lord praying for His murderers, she exclaimed, 'I have never heard of such a thing,' and became silent."

"This week every spare half-hour has been spent paying New Year visits; we have been most kindly received and often had a Gospel talk. At one house there were many visitors, all of high position. One, a Turkish lady, attacked me on our Lord's Sonship, and its impossibility in the face of our belief in the unity of God. All listened while I tried to explain its spiritual character. I had hardly finished when another Turkish lady broke in with the question: 'What do you think of our Prophet?' At once a chorus of 'Peace be upon him,' sounded round the room, and then dead silence. I sketched briefly amid murmurs of applause the period in which Mohammed lived, the Arabs and the evils of idolatry, and his life work in turning them from idols. And then said, 'While acknowledging him as a leader and teacher among his people, he was not the Saviour of the world,' adding that they needed to come to Christ for pardon, salvation, and blessing—were they coming? 'We know the truth, our Prophet has given us the Qur'án.' I answered, 'Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; shall we not together pray

that the one true God may cast out of our hearts all error and falsehood and give us His truth?' 'Amen, amen,' echoed round the room."

"The Haji's wife and daughter paid me a long visit. At first they said they were sayyids and had no need of a Saviour, but the story of His love riveted their attention and, later, they sent for me to their garden to tell them more. A Jewess rather took me aback the other day by saying, 'Khánum, instead of the lesson to-day I wish you would tell me about Christ's birth. Some of my relatives say the Virgin Mary had several sons, how then was it possible for Jesus to be the Son of God; if one of Mary's sons was so, why not say all were?' So without preparation I had to take St. Matt. i., but I am sure God gave me the words to say, for she seemed quite to understand, and said, 'I am glad that difficulty has gone, I could not see how it could be, or give any answer.'"

"A street dog flew at a poor woman, biting her leg badly; for several days she tried her own remedies, but now she comes to me every day to have the wounds dressed. The first day she asked me what proofs we have that our books, especially the Gospels, are true. Next day I tried to explain the Gospel plan. Yesterday she was keen on whether the sayyids would have a better chance than others of entrance into heaven. Romans iii. seemed quite to satisfy her, only she asked: 'What must any one do and believe in to be a Christian?' To-day her first greeting was: 'Before any one comes I want

to tell you that I wish to be a Christian. Say nothing to any one now; when I am well I want to come and learn and believe, and then I will tell them all.'"

"The lady who gave me my kitten interests me greatly. She is much better read than most women. Her father was very wealthy and very pious, and at his death he willed nearly the whole of his property to the poor, as a meritorious deed to obtain a better place in heaven. She asked me if I thought this would benefit her too, and from that we went on to a long talk on the way of salvation, and to whom God would grant it."

"Another opening door is among the poor down-trodden Jews. The Áqá, who is high priest, not only for Yezd but for Persia, sent for me when his daughter was dying, and several times permitted me to pray with her to 'the God of Abraham.' Calling later, they told me they sorely needed more books for the poorer boys belonging to their school. When I took them the priest gave the Pentateuchs and Psalms to the boys, and put the Hebrew Testaments and Persian Bibles on one side. I said if they would not use them I would rather take them away as we reverenced them, knowing they were the everlasting Word of God. The priest dismissed the boys and then followed an eager talk, a Kerman priest and four Yezd ones begging the high priest's permission to have a Hebrew Testament and a Persian Bible, so that they might compare the

Scriptures. Then the high priest asked me to read Gen. iii. and Psalm xxii. aloud in Persian, whilst they followed in their own books. I tried to point out that all the prophecies in both passages were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. This he vehemently denied, but permitted the others to take the books. Since then we have met several times, and I have no doubt by the way they refer to different passages that they are reading regularly. The last time I saw the Agha, about ten days ago, he permitted his grandchildren as well as several women to remain in the room. After the preliminary courtesies had been exchanged he said, 'We are ancient Jews and you are modern; we all belong to one stock. We are like two fingers of one hand, we have kept to the old, you have gone to something new.' I tried to show how much we have in common, our acceptance of the Books of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms. Then very briefly I sketched our Lord's life, and he exclaimed, 'Do not say He was killed; if He were killed there is no hope for us.' I showed him St. John x. 18, and St. John xix. 30, and he seemed satisfied. I went again on Saturday afternoon as the women are free from work then; they are very ignorant, and so nervous, but some now welcome me as a friend. They were friendly and willing to listen, and again we united in prayer to the 'God of Abraham.' The fact of my having two Jewish names seems to be a bond of union. I hear them telling each other, 'She is Maryam and her sister-in-law is Hannah.' This week an unusual

number of Jewesses have been to the dispensary and listened quietly to the prayers."

Another and most important means of evangelization in a country like Persia is in the villages, and Mary Bird was one of its strongest advocates. The value of itinerating is not only in the village crowds, but in the comparatively easy contact with all sorts and conditions of men (seldom women), on the long, slow caravan journeys along the roads that are the great arteries for communication. People of all kinds *can* be met with in a great city like Isfahan, but on the road there are no spies to report that such and such a one goes to the farangi; and in the villages the arrival of a European stranger glad to talk and read to the people, is generally welcomed as a relief to the tedious monotony of life. There are drawbacks where a brief visit only is paid, the first and last it may be for years. But marvellous are the results of the messages given, either by written or spoken words, and these are the more wonderful considering the difficulties which must present themselves to a reasoning mind. The contrast between Mohammedanism and Christianity is so great, the reconciliation so impossible. But God's Word can and does work without human aid; the seed must be sown by men but its germination and growth are divine. Most of Mary Bird's village work was done on journeys and during her so-called holidays; she would never take more than a

fortnight of partial rest, and then worked in the villages, through the hottest weeks of the summer. Of some of this work she wrote :—

" I have been to some of the mountain villages where Mrs. White and I went last year. The teaching had not been forgotten, and the people were much more willing to listen. At one place a Haji's wife, whose children I had attended for small-pox when they were very bigoted, invited me to tea. To my surprise I found over thirty women there; they begged for a Bible lesson, and were perfectly attentive for an hour, while I tried to tell them of God's way of salvation. As I was leaving one of the women made my heart ache by saying, 'Now we shall not hear any more for a year."

" One day in a village we stopped to ask the way to a patient's house from some women, quite a little crowd of them gathering round us. One very intelligent woman asked if I worshipped both God and Jesus Christ. All listened so attentively while I tried to tell them of the love of the Father in giving His Son, and of the Son in coming to save sinners. Then the intelligent woman, who was a reader of religious services for women, offered to take me to the patient's house at the other side of the village. All the way she talked of religion,—how many Saviours are there? and so on. She was so keen for me to read at the cottage, and said she had a gospel of St. Luke, which some one had brought from Yezd, and she wanted St. John. She came back to the caravanserai to get

it, saying, 'If you were staying a day or two I would come and sit beside you and learn the meaning.' "

"Last Sunday I had an invitation to read at a cottage near here, and found twenty women waiting and all so willing to listen, except one Yezd visitor, but she soon went to sleep, and we had such a good time. Again, later in the afternoon in a cornfield, the women were reaping, and they too invited me to their different homes, and I have been going to some each afternoon, always finding a welcome."

Before settling down to regular work in Kerman in January, 1914, Miss Bird paid a visit to Khabis, a city two and a half days' journey from Kerman. Here there is the ruin of an ancient Christian church. The Persians call it "the place of ringing of bells," and declare that it never belonged to them, for it faces Jerusalem, not Mecca. When will bells again call the people of Khabis to Christian worship ?

Her own account of this visit is of great interest. She wrote :—

"I started on January 5, with a donkey load of medicine and one of bedding, clothing, etc., a servant, and a muleteer. The first day's march was across the plain, over a low spur of mountains into a much narrower one. . . . The mountains were all white with snow and glistened in the bright moonlight. I was the first to notice a fine wolf, of which there are many in these mountains. . . . Next day our journey for five hours was along the bed of a mountain torrent. Suddenly

we left the stream, and for about ten miles followed a winding valley up the mountains, where oleander grows wild. . . . We halted for lunch and then began to climb the zigzag path up the mountain side. The view from the summit was magnificent, down three valleys with separate mountain ranges, all the high peaks dazzlingly bright with the sunshine on the snow . . . the sky cloudless blue and not a sound of human voice. I was never so struck before by the absolute stillness and peace of God's mighty works. What a contrast to the rush and noise of man's !

" We descended about a mile and rode to the next plain where we spent the night in a garden of fine date palms and orange trees. . . . We started at sunrise and reached Khabis at noon. There are over ten thousand inhabitants, but at first one only sees stately date palms, with a thick undergrowth of orange, lime, lemon, and citron trees. . . . I hired a room and told the men to say I would see women and children. Thirty-five came the next morning, and the numbers steadily increased during the sixteen days I was there, as many as a hundred and fifty coming per day. . . . They were always most attentive during the short Gospel talk and prayers, and on Sunday, when there was no dispensary, they kept coming from 7.30 to 12.15 ; my room was never empty. No one brought up any Moslem argument but all listened attentively to the ' new news,' and the expression seemed such a terrible reproach. . . . I rarely finished dispensary before 2 p.m., and before

I had finished my midday meal some one was waiting to take me to visit a patient or for a social visit, where again the people would listen to teaching.

"One old woman said she would like a reading at her house, but how much would I charge? When I replied, Nothing, only I should like her to invite one or two neighbours, she was amazed, saying, 'Our mullá would not come under five shillings, and then he must have tea, best lump sugar, fruit, and sweets.' We arranged for Sunday afternoon, and I found thirty-four women, and babies galore waiting for me under the shade of a great palm tree. They were so attentive. . . .

"Of course a first visit may cause much curiosity, but surely that is God-given to bring them within sound of the Gospel. I do hope some one may be able to go to Khabis next autumn or winter. . . . The return journey was by the same road but under very different circumstances, one donkey fell and was lamed . . . a bad dust storm came on and we had to take refuge in a place where there are a number of caves. . . . The last stage was on Saturday, the 24th. I arranged to ride on with my servant and let the muleteer bring the loads at his leisure. At 11.30 we had descended the mountain, crossed the mountain torrent twenty-six times, and reached the village where the road crosses the plain. I had only just bought barley when a woman invited me into her house to see a sick baby, the women from the neighbouring houses following me. I told them of Christ blessing little children, and explained how His blood

can cleanse our hearts and make them pure as a baby's. The old grannie sobbed, 'My heart is not like the heart of a little child. I have been a very wicked woman; my burden of sin is very, very heavy.' I taught her St. Matt. xi. 28, and she had not quite perfected it when a man's voice repeated it correctly! Looking round I found the village men were sitting behind a big mulberry tree, and with them a wealthy Kermani. After many polite expressions inquiring after each other's honourable health, hoping each other's noses were fat, and that our shadows might never grow less, the gentleman told me I had been teaching for three-quarters of an hour by his watch! that he was glad to listen, for he was afraid to be seen listening to Christians in town. It was he who had said the text. The donkeys had finished their barley, so we mounted at once as we had twenty-one miles to ride. I enjoyed my lunch of bread and hard-boiled eggs as we trotted along. We arrived at Kerman safely at 8.30 p.m., tired, but very thankful for all the mercies of the past three weeks.

"The day before we left Khabis the Persian officer's wife invited me to tea, and showed me two rooms, with a large veranda between, and said that if I came again she would let me have them free of charge at a week's notice. If I cannot go I hope some of the mission ladies will, for when the people are so willing for teaching it does not seem right to leave them for years unvisited."

Dr. Emmeline Stuart, who was spending part of

her furlough in Kerman, wrote, in May, 1915, about a visit she had just paid to Khabis and other villages: "This was a place Miss Bird had intended to visit last autumn, and in fact she was on her way there when strieken with her last illness, and I felt it a special privilege to be able to visit it in her stead. I was mueh touched, on entering the village late one night, to get a warm welcome from the people 'for Maryam Khánum's sake.' As I read to them out of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel and came to the words, 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . ,' they said, 'That was just the way with Maryam Khánum—she was always thinking about heavenly things and turning her own and other people's thoughts thither.'"

Behold! he lent me as we went the vision of the Seer;
Behold! I saw the life of men, the life of God shine clear.
I saw the hidden spirit's thrust; I saw the race fulfil
The spiral of its step ascent, predestined of the Will.
Yet not unled, but shepherded by One they may not see,
The One Who walked with starry feet the Western road by me!

EVELYN UNDERHILL.

CHAPTER X

Mary Bird as a Friend and an Inspiration

WE have seen Mary Bird in varied ways proving herself the friend of the Persians, but others also laid claim to her friendship, and were inspired by it.

Many were proud to call her "friend," and to her own people, especially her mother, her relationship was not of love only but of friendship and fellowship. In her letters to her mother there were no extravagant expressions of love and devotion, but there was sweet solicitude, and a deep understanding, expressions of new and ever-growing needs, and constantly widening views of what her mother had been and was to her. A few extracts must suffice here.

"I often wonder if you realize what your weekly letter means to me. The weighed-out, thought-over, prayed-over comments on the work here are very helpful, and then my weekly 'Crumbs of Comfort' I need sorely. How can I thank you enough for all you have granted me during these years abroad and how many others have cause to thank you too!"

"How can I thank you for another year's love, prayer, advice, intercourse? I used to think a mother was most needed and valued in childhood;

now I have learnt one cannot appreciate the gift, one of God's best, until one is grown up, and has entered into the companionship, as well as protection, of the parental love."

"I think one realizes more fully than ever the preciousness of a mother, a Christian mother, living in this land. The very backbone of English greatness is its Christian home-life. Look what this land is without that! I always feel parents must gain a clearer insight into God's fatherhood than we can, who have not experienced either the greater joys or sorrows of a parent's heart."

"It seems to me the ripe experience of older life must enable the Christian to bring forth the 'more fruit' that will bring glory to our God and King; and, darling, you know you are my special minister. No one preaches such loving, helpful sermons to me as you do, and many a passage is passed on to friends, European or Persian. May I be enabled to follow you as you have followed Christ. I am trying not to be anxious about you, but as the beautiful Persian phrase expresses it, 'to place you in God's Hand.'"

Her father's influence had been great on her life, and he was often in her thoughts.

"Yours and dear father's example have nerved me to fresh effort many a time, and can never be forgotten. I can hardly realize this will be the seventh anniversary of his death; it seems but yesterday we heard him say, 'Good-night till the morning.' What a glorious dawn that was for

him, with no cloud of earth to come between him and the Sun of Righteousness! Where there is no sun I suppose the flight of days and years must pass unnoticed, except for the ever-increasing experience of God's love, goodness, and glory, to the limit of which even the redeemed in glory can surely never attain. I often wonder if those who have gone before will be permitted to teach those who follow after, or whether they will minister to those who during this present life never had the opportunity of hearing of a Saviour's love. How father would rejoice in such a ministry. But time alone will reveal the mysterious joys beyond the veil, enough for us to know our loved ones are for ever with the Lord. 'At even-time it shall be light.' May you have the glorious golden rays of the sunset hours, to cheer you along what might otherwise be a shadowed part of the road; so that you may go forward, assured that the intensifying shades of glory and beauty are the reflected rays of the perfection of it on the other side."

In 1901, at the time of Dr. Harriet Bird's marriage, her sister, she wrote:—

"Will you tell me quite candidly what you feel about my return home? I am sure the Fifth Commandment was purposely placed first in the list of those concerning man, and immediately after those relating to God. I know you gave me up fully, gladly, for God's service in Persia, but if you would like to have the poor old spinster daughter with you, I am sure it will be truly God's service to

minister to my dearest mother, as well as my delight. Much as I love the work here, still I am ready for this fresh ministry, and you know all the interests of missionary life have not made me forget or cease to care for the home life."

She went back to this home life for a time, and the love which almost amounted to reverence, and "the exquisite devotion of mother and daughter" were apparent to all who knew them.

Her old home life always held many memories of delight; and her gratitude for the thoughtful love of her own people for her finds constant expression:—

"Loving memories are very precious, and I do pity those who have not got them. I think no one can have such happy memories as I have."

"Truly my childhood is rich in lovely memories of all kinds, the fragrance of which is ever new."

"I never can thank God enough for allowing me the high privilege, and you all for sparing me for a missionary life. Oh, that I were a better messenger, swifter to carry the glad tidings, and with more winged words to tell them!"

"It is nice that it is the family's loaf that feeds me, only I often fear that I have Benjamin's portion!"

"I find my boxes are just like Elizabeth's bag in 'Swiss Family Robinson.' I have only to wish for a thing and there it is. What a spoilt child I am. But I do thank God for the gift of such a mother, brother, and sisters, and pray that He

will reward you abundantly, for it is not in my power to make any return. I am trying to be less fussy and crotchety; forgive me for being so much so in the past."

"The years fly so quickly; sometimes it seems ages since I heard your voices, and a longing will come for one more sound of them. But, after all, how much closer is the union of interest, of love, of work for the same Almighty Father, even with separation, than that of dwelling together under one roof with nothing in common with one another."

Mary Bird's general friendliness did not exclude special friendship, though her unselfishness kept it in check; and, like most great souls, she had "friends." Naturally little can be said of this in detail; the later extracts will give many sidelights. She wrote:—

"Oh, for wisdom to do the right thing! Not even friendship must come between us and our service for the Master. I have found that though sometimes the 'dearest friend' cannot realize or enter into all I feel, yet afterwards he or she does, and the temporary misunderstanding has made union all the sweeter. Still, in a deeper sense, the imperfect human soul can never perfectly understand, nor the other perfectly explain, so that it rests with the All-perfect One, Who needs not the faulty explanation, to know all, and satisfy the inexpressible longing of each heart."

"I loved to think it was only God's atmosphere

that was hiding you from my sight, and that in Him we are as closely united in love, sympathy, prayer, and thought for each other as ever."

Though no one could have been more anxious for harmony with those she worked with, her work generally lay on a different and wider plane, hence much of it she did alone. But she entered fully into the lives of others, and "Birdie," as they loved to call her, was the one to whom every one went for advice, help, and encouragement. She was aware of this, and wrote :—

"About my attitude as regards my fellow-workers, I will try to be very watchful; the responsibility of being senior is great. I do try to lead and advise, never to drive or order my co-workers, whether younger or older. For one thing, I think God has granted each his or her special gifts, which, if the lines of work are too closely laid down by a senior, may never have room for development, and therefore much talent and power be wasted. I am sure God does not want us all to work in one line, but rather to fit into one another, that His perfect plan may be accomplished ; but the thing is to do this without knocking the corners ! "

"It seems to me women living alone, or even together, get into ruts and narrow little ways much sooner than men, and generally find it harder to give and take, though, of course, there are grand exceptions to the rule. Whatever one's calling in life may be, it will have its disadvantages as well as

advantages, and if we want the work—be it what it may, secular or religious—to go forward, the aim must be kept steadily in view. I believe a prayerful effort to do this helps one to think less of trifles; and definite, usually separate duties, are a real help and interest."

How far Mary Bird was a friend and an inspiration to her fellow-workers, and especially to those with whom she lived, is best told by themselves.

"It is indeed a privilege to have been one of her friends."

"She was like a mother to me. Although so busy, she was the one we always turned to in distress of any kind. . . . It was impossible to be pessimistic where she was, she never expected the worst till it came, and it did one good, like medicine, to hear her cheery, ringing laugh."

"I think it was God's crowning goodness to send me such a sweet woman to work with out here. He gave me Mary, to the delight of my life. She was so bright and full of energy . . . with her bright, merry eyes, the very life and soul of all the work here, Persians and Europeans alike leaning on and loving her."

"Mary Bird's 'brimming years' are an inspiration, for she worked largely without strain, and came home often unwearied and gay in spirit after a long day's toil, and the jaded air that most of us feel after long hours of work was rarely seen upon her. This was partly because she had that child-like nature, and royalty of inward

happiness, that is a special charm and rarity in grown-up folk."

The objective of all her dealings with others was to give rather than take. As she brought so much sunshine to other people she could not keep out of it herself; but she would have given more joy to those who loved her if she had allowed them sometimes to minister to her. In this she wronged them. "Birdie" was always ready to nurse those who were ill, to prepare dainty dishes, and to put in stitches for others. She had a large correspondence, and always time for other people, and for "one thing more"; but it was at the expense of her own health and strength; her days were full, and so extra work had to be done by night. She never liked others to take trouble for her, but always felt her obligation to them. Life was a responsibility, and she was afraid of letting it be "too self-indulgent." Those who knew her will smile at this expression, but it was her own.

Mary Bird's humble mind would shrink from a laudatory account of her life and work, nay, more, from any record at all. Yet she would surely forgive these pen pictures from those who knew and loved her during her years in Persia, if she felt they might in any way inspire others to love and care for her beloved Persians. She never evaded what to others might seem the burdens of life, and so she never missed the blessing, but often was able to share her double blessings with others. May it

be so now! During the last few months men and women from consulates, government, bank, and mission houses have written freely and with remarkable agreement of Mary Bird, and of what she stood for to them. Europeans abroad know each other well, and their testimonies can be relied upon.

Others among the missionaries have written as follows:—

"She has left a fragrant memory behind, and an inspiration to others to try and follow her example of unselfish devotion and earnestness. All the Persians who knew her, even strong Mohammedans, acknowledge that she lived near to God."

"She lived the fullest life of all the people I have known. She was extraordinarily broad in her point of view, and her perceptions were wonderful, and yet her broad sympathy and humorous knowledge only seemed to strengthen her in her absolute devotion to duty."

"She had a strong personality, impressive in its earnestness, unique in method, charming in its persuasiveness, and attractive in its sense of humour."

"Her devoted and self-sacrificing life has left us a very wonderful example. We may feel that hers was a standard not easy to be lived up to . . . still it is none the less instructive, and something to be striven after. One felt that her life was indeed a living sacrifice."

"She worked as if the time was short, and the very best must be made of opportunities given. . . .

She had a most helpful spirit of hopefulness, always trying to think and find out the best in every one, and refusing to be cast down or depressed by difficulties."

"Miss Bird was one of my wife's, and I think I can say one of my own greatest personal friends. Nothing upset her so much as when one tried to get her to do less work; certainly no worker that I have ever met could do the amount she did in twenty-four hours."

"She was so humble minded and ready to accept any new idea, or learn from any one . . . at the same time her experience . . . made her invaluable as an adviser and helper."

"Her frailty was overmastered by her will to serve, to spend and be spent for the Master. Her flesh was truly overcome by her mighty spirit."

"The men's work will keenly miss the help she gave, as she read in the wards . . . besides helping in some anæsthetic work. . . . How empty her place will be, and how many more of the same sort are needed *everywhere*!"

Those who wrote thus, it may be urged, shared her calling and were prejudiced in her favour. So we turn to what others outside the mission circle say, people who met her socially at those rare intervals when she was "off duty"; those whom she lovingly tended in times of illness; those who saw her going about the dusty streets and lanes of the city! Such were often constrained to send

through her help for the sick and needy, which otherwise they would never have given. They believed in her as a judge of character and trusted her discernment.

"My husband and I were always greatly impressed by her personality; she had a firmness and decision of character rare to find combined with such lovableness. An interesting talker, she took a broad outlook, and was always ready to discuss from different points of view. She had wonderful qualities."

"We used to talk and marvel over the unique little woman, with so frail a body, and such an untiring spirit, ability, and courage all so splendidly devoted to her Master's service."

"Her unselfish devotion to her work was the admiration of every one, and the European colony, outside the Mission, both in Yezd and Kerman, looked upon her as an ideal missionary. All loved to have her in their homes."

"You could never talk to Miss Bird without hearing something interesting."

"She was full of humour, and her severe labours never daunted her sense of fun and desire to make others happy. She always saw what was best in people, and so helped them to live up to her idea of what they were. Her love of souls was so deep, yet it did not obscure her thought for their bodies."

"Though non-missionary people were rarely privileged to see much of her, I have the feeling that she is an old and dear friend. She came to see

me to say good-bye, just a day or so before setting out on the journey from which she never returned ; and I have a very vivid picture of her dainty little figure under the shadow of a great vine, as we sat and chatted, under the cloudless sky, and looked over to the glorious girdle of the eternal hills. . . . There was no European in Kerman who heard the news of her death without the sincerest grief. I wish I could give you a more adequate idea of what Miss Bird meant to all of us ; pen and ink are feeble media to convey the respect and affection which are evoked by a personality like hers."

"Truly she was a saint who made it easier for others to believe in God."

And finally, one who held high authority in the Church which is in Persia, writes :—

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of her in a friendship of more than twenty-three years. I pray that Persia may be blessed by having other missionaries like her, humble, prayerful, zealous, self-denying, courageous, instant in season and out of season. She being dead yet speaketh, calling us all to consecrate ourselves fully to Christ's service."

Not for herself, 'twas "In the Lord"
Her calm heart leaning on His word.
His love the joy which made her strong,
In darkest night, her quiet song,
Through all her life, one undertone
That whispered softly—"Not your own."

HETTY BOWMAN.

CHAPTER XI

"A Faithful Soldier and Servant" at Work and at Rest

MARY BIRD was considered "a magnificent missionary," but greater surely was the honour of being looked upon as a prayerful, humble, unselfish servant of Jesus Christ, with a single eye to God's glory. Need it be said that she had the utmost confidence in her Leader and Master, and believed absolutely in the ultimate triumph of the Cross? This led her to give a glad, quiet, calm service. She understood that

> It is a comely fashion to be glad.
> Joy is the grace we say to God.

She worked in a restful dependence on God, hence there was no waste of force, no friction—she asked no greater blessedness than work. Through all her years in Persia she waged a warfare with sin, superstition, and difficulty, yet her work was never an irksome obligation, it never overwhelmed her, nor did it ever become commonplace. She rejoiced greatly in the progress brought about by the work of others.

Her example while in England of never being off duty made lasting impressions on many lives, and specially on those of some who followed her

to the mission field. In her work, her absolute and unflinching adherence to duty carried her through times of weariness and pain which were veiled from others; and what was enough to daunt many brave hearts only seemed to amuse her.

In all her work her desire was not to choose, but to obey. She had leanings to special places, to work with special people, to do special kinds of work, but she was always ready to be and do what those in authority advised, and in that way to carry out what she believed to be God's will for her. She was servant of all, like the Master she loved.

And then the grace of continuance was hers. "Unto her life's end" she carried the message of the love of God.

A few of her own thoughts about her life and service will show clearly the spirit that dominated her:—

"I know you will pray that I may always go to town remembering Whose servant I am, and be given tact as well as courage to witness for our Master, and that I may serve Him more faithfully and humbly than I do. I want to be always a loving, faithful messenger of the Gospel of Peace, and not be 'side tracked.' Sometimes lately it has been such a temptation to cut short the teaching, the sick ones need so much attention, and it is a difficult question to know what to give up. The Devil always whispers, 'Teach less to-day, to-morrow you will be less hurried,' and as I listen

I know it is a lie—he will do his utmost to make it still more difficult to-morrow."

"May God forgive the sins and shortcomings of the past and make me a more faithful servant, wherever, and as long as He sees fit to spare me. May I grow more like my Master, and be consecrated in will, heart, and thought to His service."

"Living in a Moslem land where God's essence is spoken of as power, never as love, which is said to imply a degree of weakness, it is constantly forced upon one that both power and love spring from and are yet united in 'the fruit of the Spirit.' Where the Holy Spirit is denied to exist, or degraded to the rank of a prophet; and the Son of God Who came to reveal God the Father's love, is only acknowledged as human and not divine, there is not sufficient human love to make people devote their lives to philanthropy. But many make great and spasmodic efforts at 'works of supererogation,' which Persians speak of as *savabs*, for according to their number will be the place and dignity of the doer thereof in the next world. There is no verb 'to love' in Persian; 'to have a friend' is the expression. And no word for 'conscience.' I suppose they have never needed either, for fatalism deadens the former, and the latter has never been awakened. But Persia belongs to the King of kings and Lord of lords, and He will reign here in purity, justice, and love. What a contrast to this seething mass of moral and social corruption."

"As usual my plans are quite indefinite, but I

am spared all the responsibility of the arrangements, which rest with the Committee, and I have only to try and be faithful in the little daily duties. Probably I shall be remaining in Yezd this winter. I really do not mind whether I stay here or go to Kerman, and the uncertainty does not worry me in the least. It matters not where my service is if it is in the place God has appointed, and where He will use and bless me. What I do feel is the strain of the fight with spiritual foes marshalled by the great Adversary, and we in the fighting line again ask that we may always be remembered at the Throne of Grace."

"Thank God that He has permitted me to be a stone-picker and ditcher. May streams of living water from Christ the Fountain-head flow through the mean ditches, carrying before them all that is defiled, and causing life and verdure. 'Arabia shall blossom,' and I take it this promise includes all Moslem lands."

Four months exactly before her home call she wrote :—

"I feel how slow I am to learn. Nearly fifty-five years of a loving Father's discipline, and yet I am so imperfect ; truly His love and patience are as marvellous as His almighty power. May my service be less marred by self and its imperfections. While God has permitted and enabled me to do a little weeding and ploughing, the 'left undone' is the prevailing feeling in looking back. May He pardon all, and commission and strengthen

and guide me, that my furrow may be straight by the side of my Master's, if He should see fit to spare me for another year. God knows His own work best, and we can leave it all in His hands, and just go on day by day trying 'not to serve Him much, but to please Him perfectly.' Certainly only the victory of the Cross of Christ can bring permanent peace to these lands. May we be faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end."

During Mary Bird's last three years in Persia she wrote frequently to those with whom she had been associated in work in Liverpool. In one letter published in the localized "C.M. Gleaner," she shows very clearly what her ideas of service were :—

"Our Bible teaches us much about building, from a prophet's chamber to a king's palace, treasure cities for man, and temples for the Lord. Enormous numbers of skilled and unskilled labourers were employed, but the conditions of service show a strong contrast; on the one hand forced labour, resulting in sighing and bitter cries; on the other, willing service, resulting in joy and gladness of heart. Are we to be found in the forced labour party, grudgingly, of necessity taking part? Or are we among those who 'offered willingly,' whether skilled or unskilled workers? . . .

"The magnitude of the task before us is overwhelming. Half the inhabitants of the world still to be evangelized! We hear God's command, 'Go

forward,' and the bitter cry of the nations. It will mean heavy service, great self-sacrifice, the daily taking up of our God-given cross; the being willing to be counted nothing that we may be used to win souls; fatigue of soul and body; but 'let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' . . . Some workers may be called into their Master's presence-chamber before their field is ready to be reaped, but God is eternal and His purpose and work will not fail."

The following story is a picture of Mary Bird not "in the abstract," but "on duty" on a journey :—

"It was a glorious night, moon and stars truly ruling the night, and casting such a soft light on the bare desert and mountains. This district of Kermanshah has just been put under the charge of a Shirazi prince, a fine, polite young fellow of 26. He has a band of thirty foot-soldiers and twenty horsemen; six are wealthy Shiraz Kháns, the rest are Baluchis. He has only just returned from Baluchistan with flying colours; his troop captured the robbers and stolen property, and he took a camp single-handed. He laughed like a boy over the account, for it really was an accident; his horse bolted, and charged into the robbers' camp; he fought hard, stunned and wounded fifteen men, and took the place. 'So that my horse got me my present employment,' he said.

"I told the Prince it was one of my greatest desires, which I feared might never be fulfilled, to die either in Baluchistan or Afghanistan. He looked down from his fine Arab horse to poor little me on my donkey, far too polite to laugh aloud, but with eyes twinkling with amusement, and said, 'Khánum, I don't think you are afraid, but you could never learn to fight.' 'Oh, yes, I could; I would not use a revolver or Martini, but it would be a hand-to-hand sword fight, and my sword is sharp.' His face was a study, every muscle twitching with laughter. 'I would rather ride across the desert with you. It is true there are robbers; I am afraid you would be cut down at the first stroke.' A trooper leant forward eagerly. 'Khánum, have you tried your sword? Were you not in Isfahan?' Evidently he had grasped my meaning. For a few minutes we talked of spiritual warfare. The prince listened respectfully and then said, 'Christians may win in that fight, Moslems do not; look at that band of pilgrims we are just going to overtake. Will they be conquerors after going to Mecca?' 'No,' I said, 'a visit to a dead prophet's grave cannot free them from the power of their enemy. Our risen, living, almighty Saviour has conquered in this fight, and He can and will give us victory by faith in His sacrifice, which was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, so that each of us—you, noble prince, and I—may fight under His victorious banner.' A fierce dispute arose principally among the Shirazi Kháns as to

our Lord's death and Resurrection, and I had no further opportunity of talking.

"Several times on the journey sick women and children have been brought from places twenty or thirty miles away for me to see them. When I asked how they knew I was coming they said the postman had brought news the foreign ladies were on the road. 'Yes, but it might have been some of the others.' 'Oh, but we asked if it was Maryam Khánum with the white hair!'

"The Prince has not been with us the last two nights, only seven troopers and seven foot-soldiers. We have had such talks, they are all dissatisfied, restless, seeing that other countries have more prosperity, and imagining it is because they have Parliaments and civilization. A Shirazi Khán, who, for the love of his prince, was wrongfully bastinadoed for three consecutive hours, and another, a Naib from Anar, who has joined the troopers, kept very close all the night before last. The former knew nothing of the Gospel, the latter surprised me by his thoughtful questions, especially about our Lord's Second Coming. I said, 'You have read the Gospel?' 'Yes,' he said, 'for seven years.' Last night he rode up to me, saying, 'I am a Christian like you.' Knowing such statements are often made to gain favour, I questioned him, and found he had been a reader and seeker after truth for some time; then a talk with Mr. Blackett had helped him greatly, and now he says, 'I know and own no other Saviour or Mediator but Jesus

Christ; all the Imáms and prophets are dead, they can do nothing for us.' The Shirazi Khán rode up and asked what we were talking about, and I told him it was of Christ being the only Mediator between God and man; he turned to the Naib, who explained fearlessly, and this led to a long talk on the Incarnation and Atonement. Later, I was much struck as he said, 'I have seen the Light. I don't want the darkness.'"

A fellow-worker writes: "It was wonderful how Mary Bird saw parables in nature. One day I was sitting with her by a mountain stream, which was rushing down joyously over the stones. Soon its course was diverted for irrigation purposes, but the water flowed just as gladly and freely down the new channel made for it. She turned to me, and pointed out how our lives ought to be like that water, glad to joyously obey the Master's will; wherever He may send us, or whatever He may order for us. She certainly carried this out in her own life, which was given over to the Lord Whom she loved so much, and was so ready to meet, when the call came."

Her own allusions to nature are many. Thus she wrote:—

"The clear rushing stream and lovely green trees and mountains on all sides of ever-varying colour, exquisite dawns, or 'lying sunrises,' as Persians call them—sunrises, sunsets, and silvery moonlight, make one exclaim, 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.' I can see some of my favourite

"Blue Thistles." Deh-bālā, near Yezd

(From a sketch by Miss J. Biggs)

blue thistles high up where nothing else would grow, looking so fresh and beautiful, with their winged seeds ripening to be scattered far and wide. They are perfect emblems of what we should be, rooted on a rock, showing a beauty not our own, growing in the driest, most impossible places, yet with seeds of precious gospel messages ripening in the seed vessels of our hearts, ready to be scattered far and wide by God's great agent, the wind."

Her last letter to a friend says: "Do pray for me that I may grow in grace, tactfulness, courage, and love. I so much need them for the service God has entrusted to me. The demands on time and strength are great, but as my favourite motto says, 'Greater than the strength, need can never be,' for our God never has and never will fail us. One cannot tell how long or how short one's time of service may be, but may the last part be more to my Saviour King's honour and glory. I hope you will have a good holiday in Deh Bala."

Dr. Winifred Westlake, with whom Miss Bird lived during her last eight months in Kerman, gives the following account of the close of her earthly service:—

"After itinerating in Khabis in January, 1914, Miss Bird was looking forward to meeting, if possible, some of the Khabis ladies again. They had invited her to stay with them in their garden houses in the hill village of Sirj, to the vineyards of which the dwellers in the Khabis orange and date palm groves go in the summer-time. Miss Bird deemed

August to be the best month for leaving Kerman and could not be persuaded to entertain the idea of trying to spend a certain number of the long, hot July days in the uplands of Sirj, some forty miles to the east of Kerman. However, in June the number of typhoid patients and the severity of their illnesses seemed about to preclude the possibility of change of air for any one in attendance on them until August. Nevertheless, convalescents made progress sufficiently well, and other work was arranged, so that by the end of July, or a little earlier, all the missionaries had, generally speaking, moved some fifteen or twenty miles away from the city. Miss Bird was the last to go. She was busy in the dispensary on August 1. The next day she dined at the Bank House, and was bright and interesting as usual. She seemed quite well, and said nothing of having had fever. On Monday, August 3, she was busy in the hospital, afterwards went to say good-bye to two convalescent typhoid patients, and then set off for her journey to the hills with the intention of reaching Sirj in three stages. After a tedious first stage, owing to the ill-fed, overworked load donkeys being unable to go up hill at even an ordinary walking pace, Miss Bird arrived at Dr. and Mrs. Dodson's camp at Deh Shaheb, and there it was soon discovered that she had high fever. Typhoid fever being suspected, all the necessary arrangements were speedily made. Dr. and Mrs. Dodson, Miss Petley, and I, together or in turn, tended her during twelve days in camp, and every

advantage of loving care and ready skill available was made the most of. Appliances, such as a spring bedstead in an airy tent in the little vineyard, were not wanting. But Mary Bird's life work was ended. In a few days her cheerful acceptance of weakness and grateful recognition of all done for her gradually passed into delirium in which with failing powers she seemed to be still labouring fervently, teaching the people of the love of God very simply and clearly, and praying for herself and them; then came unconsciousness, and before dawn on Sunday, 16 August, 1914, her spirit was released from her mortal frame. At 7 a.m. the next day, Monday, she was laid to rest in the tiny Christian cemetery under the shadow of the hills outside Kerman city. Nearly all the Europeans then in town were present, also the hospital staff, Mohammedans, converts, and Armenians. Great was the sorrow, far and wide, when the news of the passing away of Khánum Maryam became known, but her memory lives on to inspire to devotion of life to the Master Whom she so faithfully loved."

A brave spirit has fulfilled its mission and been released. The world moves on unknowing, but its children, especially those of the land of Persia, have been blessed by her coming; and they who know and understand shall praise God reverently in her going; for, though she rests from her labours, her works do follow her.

He that loves not lives not;
He that lives by the Life cannot die.

RAYMUND LULL.

CHAPTER XII

The Present Opportunity in Persia

THIS book has been written and is concluded while the great European War is taking place, and a few words may be said regarding Persia's attitude towards that portentous series of events. Thoughtful men in Persia are puzzled by the present upheaval in the world, and many opinions are voiced. Some cannot understand how the conduct of Christian nations can be so different from the fundamental truths of their creed, and believe that the war may greatly help the spread of Islam. Others consider it as a judgment upon Russia for her (alleged) unprovoked desecration, by bombardment, of the shrine at Meshed, and are astonished that Great Britain should support, instead of oppose, Russia. This anti-Russian feeling naturally leads to pro-German, but not necessarily anti-British, sympathies. Many honour the stand taken by the British Empire in defending the weak and fulfilling treaty obligations. Others think the present melée is the outcome of Britain's refusal to help Turkey in Tripoli and the Balkan States. However, Germany has been unremitting in her efforts to stir up Persia against Russia and Britain; and for some time ill-feeling has been rapidly growing. But the inhabitants

of Isfahan at least are now learning what they have long owed to the Allies, as Consuls, bankers, merchants, and missionaries have all temporarily withdrawn, as a protest against the weakness of the Persian Government. The consternation aroused by this step has been enormous. The doctors were implored to stay, but this would have greatly mitigated the punishment. Churches, schools, and hospitals are sealed up; but when the seals are broken Persia will realize, as never before, which Powers are her true friends, and so far as missionary work goes the opportunities will be marvellously enlarged.

Disregarding the special conditions brought about by the war, and also, with a passing mention, what may be called the past normal condition of Persian thought and attitude, it will be helpful to look at the new Persia, which has come into existence during the last few years, so that present needs and opportunities may be clearly grasped. During the past ten years a very great change has been evident. Persia's old civilization, her 2500 years of independence, her philosophy which has permeated Asia, causing her to be looked upon as "the mind of Islám," her poetry and art which have penetrated the West, her pride in her glorious past, these have indeed produced an intense self-satisfaction. For centuries Persia lacked public opinion, ideals, co-operation, trust, but was not conscious of the lack. This was her normal condition. Now, however, the situation is changed, while still clinging to

her past greatness, she acknowledges her present weakness. There is a spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction abroad—she knows she is in difficulties, hence her self-satisfaction is lessening, she is awake and aspiring. This new condition creates a new attitude towards other nations, there is a spirit of friendliness, confidence, and open-mindedness, a thirst for knowledge of ways and means absolutely unknown in the Persia of the past.

To the writer's mind this new attitude produces specific needs which constitute an urgent plea for Missions in Persia. Some are outstanding, and must be noticed.

The *need of knowledge* is fundamental and may be taken first. Those who have read what has gone before of life and work among the Persians will realize the widespread ignorance which prevails. Persia is jealous of her nationality, yet she has gladly accepted, and is increasingly keen for knowledge, which she knows she must have and which only the West can give her, a knowledge of good government, of science, of medicine; and with this, education for her children.

The problem which presents itself to the Eastern mind to-day is largely intellectual; and while the Persian sees that little can be done for the present generation, he knows that for the rising one, education is a necessity. There is an intense desire on the part of the people to get themselves out of the backwater into which they have drifted. This applies equally to Parsis, Jews, and Moslems. The

American Presbyterians have many excellent schools in the north and north-west of Persia, for both boys and girls. In Teheran they have more than 700 pupils in their schools, over 300 girls and 400 boys. The C.M.S. has a large and popular school for boys, which gives higher education in Isfahan. This, the Stuart Memorial College, was recently re-opened in a new and suitable building near the Musjid-i-Shah, which Persians consider the most sumptuous mosque in the Orient. The Society also has well-equipped schools for Moslem boys in Yezd and Kerman; and for Armenian boys and girls in Julfa, where many school teachers and hospital assistants are educated. In Shiraz, which has long enjoyed the reputation of being the literary capital, the Dar-ul-Ilm of Persia, the boys' school has been closed for want of an English head master.

Great keenness is manifested by the Persians in the education of girls. A few years ago they said, "Let our women learn to cook and sew, and we are satisfied." Now they urge the present necessity of schools for their girls, so that their grandchildren may not be possessors of their own heritage of gross ignorance. There is an absolute eagerness among the girls themselves for education, thus raising the marriage age, and helping the moral and physical well-being of the nation. Many schools have been opened by Persian women. This sign of awakening is in itself a challenge! In Isfahan the C.M.S. has a large school for Mohammedan girls, also one for Parsi girls in Yezd, and it is hoped

that girls' high schools will shortly be opened on the other side of the city of Isfahan, and in Kerman and Yezd.

We cannot afford to despise or neglect education as a powerful missionary agency in a land like Persia. It results in a marvellous breaking down of prejudice and often definite soul winning. Boys and girls go out into life with high ideals, stronger characters, and broader minds, because of their contact with those who seek, however unworthily, to serve the Lord Christ.

Another great need of Persia to-day is the uplift of her womanhood. *Woman's position* will in the near future be a burning question in the East. The great national movements of to-day involve enormous changes for women, making the danger intense. With the change there may be great advance, but only if the women are ready for it. They must be taught, and helped to understand their place and power in God's world, and both men and women must be led to a just appreciation of their relative positions. There are evident signs that the women of Persia will demand emancipation before long. In recent years both in Teheran and Tabriz they have shown what they are capable of doing. Women of the higher classes in the principal cities are anxious for intercourse with Europeans, and warmly welcome women missionaries to their houses.

Another of the crying needs of Persia is for physical healing. The *medical work* is constantly growing and increasingly valued by the people.

There are large and well-equipped hospitals in Isfahan and Yezd. In Kerman, new hospitals, very much needed, are in course of erection, but can only be completed as funds come in. A ward in the women's hospital here is being built to the memory of Mary Bird, all the beds in which, it is hoped, will be supported and some endowed by those who know what her life and work have meant to Persia and its women.

But Persia's *religious needs* are paramount. There are great movements going on in the Moslem world. Different schools of thought are closing up—there is much cohesion of movement, willing or unwilling, but very rapid, and apparently to prevent threatened disintegration. Persia, like all other Moslem lands, is seething with thought. There are many seekers after truth. Some have given up the quest and become materialists; many are indifferent; others have accepted the teaching of Abdul Bahâ; while numbers have grasped the truths of the Gospel, yet from timidity, or from contentment with their intellectual conviction and secret belief, keep back from open confession of Christ.

There is, too, a *new attitude in Persia towards Christianity.* A great deal of indifference still exists, yet, compared with the past, the change is remarkable. In St. Luke's Church, Isfahan, which owes its erection in 1909 to the faith, courage, and energy of the late beloved Bishop Stuart, there is a regular Sunday service for Mohammedans. This

church was built to seat 500 and at the time few thought it would ever be full. Eight or nine hundred men and women have often presented themselves for admission, while the ordinary weekly congregation numbers 250. To those who know Persia it is marvellous that without let or hindrance these hundreds come publicly to a Christian service. Many may come out of curiosity, but the fact remains that they do come, and listen reverently to the Gospel. It is certain that many of them are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, for Islám offers so little that really satisfies. Mohammedans are universally looking for the return of the one whom they call the twelfth Imám, and the traditions tell them that Jesus Christ will come with him. Hence they are very keen to hear about our Lord's return; the Book of Daniel specially interests them, and the portion of the Old Testament containing this book is largely bought at the Bible depôts. Many are reading the Bible with an open mind.

A special evidence of freedom of thought and conscience is seen in the fact that men of education and independent position are asking earnestly to be taught of the things of Christ.

A native doctor, recently baptized, opens his dispensary to the missionary, and welcomes a Gospel address for his patients. In a room in the men's hospital, Isfahan, the hospital catechist, an educated man of good family, may be found day after day reading and talking to a small

band of men, who drop in whenever they have time, sure of a welcome. In the hospitals and dispensaries there is great readiness to listen to the teaching, and far more freedom than there used to be. Many are only too glad to get an opportunity of learning about Christ, of Whom they may have heard from some former patient. Inquirers are constantly coming from the villages for instruction and not medicine.

In Kerman there is a remarkably liberal spirit, probably due in some degree to the religious differences among the Persians themselves, Shaikhis, Bala-Saris, Ezelis, and Bahâis being numerous; partly also perhaps to the presence of adherents of other religions in their midst, Jews, Christians, Parsis, and Hindus. The intercourse of Kerman is chiefly with Teheran, the seat of government; hence the importance of influencing those who may be future leaders in the affairs of their country.

The *native Church* in Persia is now an established fact, but many are the questions concerning its membership and administration. Great stress is laid on the necessity in almost all cases of a full year's probation, with specified instruction, for each catechumen before baptism, also that if possible all should learn to read. Close co-operation in educational and literary work with other societies is also being aimed at. Women missionaries have been granted certain voting powers at the missionary conferences. This is a pressing question affecting the status of women in the native

Church. The shepherding of the converts is of supreme importance. They are severely handicapped by their heredity and environment, which are unchanged, while a spiritual faith makes their outlook on time and eternity absolutely new. Each convert in his or her household and family circle stands for Christianity, and is a hinderer or a hastener of the Kingdom of God in the land. Many are real students of the Bible, of which a revision is considered needful. The language of the present version is too learned for the uneducated, and in any case the Bible which will be acceptable to the learned man will be difficult for the untaught woman to follow. "Daily Light" has recently been translated for the use of converts. In addition to the weekly services for Moslems, there are Sunday services for Christians, and Bible classes, which are well attended. Both religious and secular education are possible for the children of converts.

As elsewhere, the need of workers is intensified in this time of crisis of opportunity. The work is encouraging beyond belief, and the enormous widening of opportunity calls, and will call still louder, for a greater enlargement of the plan of campaign. The only limitation is caused by the inadequate supply of men and women to do the work. The Persians are as eager as ever for medical work, but education largely absorbs their thoughts. Missionaries are welcomed socially wherever they like to go, and the people come in ever-increasing

numbers to hear "the old, old story of Jesus and His love." Help is largely given by the Armenians, much of their present attitude towards missionary work being the result of the work set on foot by the late revered Dr. Bruce. Converts from Mohammedanism and Hebrew Christians are also loyal fellow workers in schools and hospitals. Miss Bird knew the value of such helpers and the importance of their training. She wrote:—

"Humanly speaking, foreigners can never evangelize a nation, but they must train the first generation of workers, and for this we need the best material England can give us. As a Mission we ought to be looking ahead, and preparing for even greater things that our God will work for us."

Mary Bird's working time after she wrote these words was very short—it is difficult to realize what a gap she has left. But one thing is certain, that others are needed to fill that gap. The secret of her power did not lie in great gifts or attainments, but in an ever-impelling confidence in the love and power of God. This is not the time to sound a retreat, to withdraw from the position already occupied for our King. God's call is imperative and urgent. Advantage must be taken of the present trend of things in Persia, and while giving of our best in the way of medical and educational help, the greatest emphasis must be on the spiritual task of making Christ and His truth known. We build not merely for to-day, but for all time, even for eternity; and it is necessary to foresee

the development of present tendencies, and the outcome of forces which are now silently at work. No one can take in God's great design for the human race without an enlargement of desire and of ability to take his share in it. Granted a larger and truer comprehension, offers of service, gifts of money, and understanding prayers will be needed—not impossible things to ask or to give for such a Leader and such a cause. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"; Christ must reign; His Kingdom is spreading, victory is assured. Let us work with brave hearts and quiet minds, in this the day of our Lord's appeal, which comes to us afresh through the world's new and complex needs, and through the understanding and the power which God has given us with which to meet those needs.

God is working His purpose out, as year succeeds to year:
God is working His purpose out, and the time is drawing near,—
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

A. AINGER.

TAMÁM SHUD.

GLOSSARY OF PERSIAN TERMS

As it was not considered necessary to insert all the accents to the Persian words in the text, they are given here in full.

Akbar	Most Great (Arabic).
Allah	God (Arabic).
Anderún	Women's apartments.
Anjuman	Assembly, committee.
Áqá	Mr. The head of the house.
Bábí	Follower of the Báb.
Bahái	Follower of Abdul Bahâ.
Báshí	Chief or great.
Bázár	Bazaar.
Birún	Outside.
Bulbul	Nightingale.
Cáravánserái	Inn of the East.
Chádar	Sheet or muslin or silk shawl.
Chápár Kháneh	Post-house.
Chárvádár	Muleteer or caravan driver.
Dari	Parsi dialect.
Dervish	Religious mendicant
Diváneh	Lunatic.
Farangi	Frank or European.
Farrásh	Lit.: Carpet sweeper. Outdoor servant.
Farsakh	About four miles.
Haji	Pilgrim.
Hakim	Doctor.
Hammám	Public bath.
Hyáts	Wandering tribes.
Imám	Leader. Applied by the Shi'ahs to the Twelve Imáms. Also in a general sense to leaders of prayers, religion, or law.
Irán	Persia.
Islám	Submission to God. The name given by Mohammed to his religion.
Kadhkudá	Head man of a village, or district of a town.
Kajavas	Covered wooden panniers.
Khalifa	Successor or deputy. Applied to the successors of Mohammed by the Sunnis.
Khán	Hereditary title. Ruler or chief.
Khánum	Lady; formerly only applied to wives of Kháns.
Khánum Maryam	"Lady Mary."
Kran	Silver coin worth about 4d., or 1,000 dinars.

Laháf	Wadded quilt.
Lút	Bare—applied to the desert.
Mást	Curdled milk.
Mirza	Clerk, secretary, tutor.
Moslem	A believer in Islám.
Mu'ezzin	The man who gives the call to prayer.
Mujtahid	Mohammedan priest of the highest order.
Muharram ..	The first month of the Mohammedan year.
Mullá	Generally used of the Mohammedan clergy. Courtesy title given to the educated.
Musjid	Mosque.
Náib	Deputy.
Nakhl	Lit.: palm. Wooden scaffolding used for hanging trophies on in *Muharram*.
Nawab	A title—deputy.
Párs	See *Zoroastrian*.
Púl	Money; a coin worth one-sixth of a penny.
Qalyán	Water pipe.
Qismat	Fate, destiny.
Qur'án	Sacred book of the Mohammedans.
Ramazán	The ninth month of the Mohammedan year. The month of the great fast.
Rasm	Custom.
Ruza Kháni ..	Religious recitation.
Safar	Second month of the Mohammedan year.
Sáhib	Master; title accorded to Europeans.
Samovar	Russian urn largely used in Persia.
Savab	Work of merit.
Sayyid	A descendant of Mohammed.
Shi'ah	Lit.: follower, nonconformist. The sect who acknowledge the Twelve *Imáms*, and who are considered orthodox in Persia.
Súfiism	A form of mysticism.
Sunni	People of the path. The orthodox Mohammedan sect who acknowledge the *Khalifas*.
Tacht-i-ravan ..	Wheelless conveyance borne by two mules.
Tamáshá	A show.
Taz'ieh	Lit.: A consolation. In Persia the annual theatrical performance of scenes from the lives of the *Shi'ah* martyrs.
Tamám Shud ..	The end; it has become finished.
Tómán	Ten *krans*, or about 4s., or 10,000 *dinars*.
Zan	Woman.
Zend Avesta ..	Sacred writings of the Parsis.
Zoroastrian ..	A follower of Zoroaster or a Parsi.

INDEX

Abdul Bahâ, or Abbas Effendi. 37, 38, 189.
Afghanistan, 19, 62
Agha Mahommed, 18.
Agriculture, 24.
Alexander the Great, 12.
Ali, 33, 34, 36, 41, 148.
American Presbyterians, 30, 67, 186.
Anderun, 49, 66, 121, 145.
Aqa, 121, 143, 151, 152.
Arabs, 16, 17, 25, 31, 102.
Arabia, 62.
Armenia, 13, 18; Christianity the State religion, 14.
Armenians, 30, 59, 61, 63, 90, 117, 183, 193.
Aryan: land, 10, 15, 27; race, 15.

Bāb, The, 37.
Bābis, sect of, 37, 71.
Babylon, 10, 11, 12, 23.
Bahâism, 37-40; 107, 143, 191.
Bahâ'ullah, 37-39.
Bakhtiaris, 25, 26.
Bala-Saris, 191.
Baluchistan, 19, 62.
Bazars, Persian, 42, 108, 127.
Betrothals, 47, 48.
Bird, Rev. Charles Robinson, 3, 5, 161, 162.
Bird, Dr. Harriet, 162.
Bird, Mary Rebecca Stewart, 1, 3; genealogy, 2; personality, 3, 4, 6, 8, 93; 168–170; birth, 4; childhood, 4, 5; early life, 5–8; at "The Willows," 6; goes to Persia, 8, 59; death, 9, 183; early impressions and experiences, 61–76; opposition to work, 67–76; attempt to poison, 94; dispensaries, 71–76, 80, 139; understanding of the Persians, 79, 136; among children, 87, 88, 107, 108, 122–126; medical work, 66, 82, 113–135; teaching, 136–159; friendships, 164, 165; appreciations of, 165, 168–171; appeal of Nature to, 54, 180, 181.
Bird, Robert Merttins, 1, 3.
Bishop, Mrs., *née* Isabella Bird, 1, 26, 94, 116, 134.
Blackett, Rev. A. R., 179.
Brides, Persian, 48, 62, 63, 85.
Brigands, 52, 55–57.
Bruce, Miss, 64, 112.
Bruce, Rev. Canon R., D.D., 58, 59, 60, 112, 133, 193.

Carless, Rev. H., 59.
Caravanserai, 51, 54, 56, 104, 133.
Carpets, Persian, 43, 44, 47; weavers, 110, 122, 123.
Carr, Dr., 55, 76.
Changis Khan, 17.
Children, Persian, 33, 48, 49, 57, 66, 87, 88, 107, 108, 122–126, 129, 130, 142, 188.
China, 14.
Christianity in Persia, 13; growth of, 14, 17; 189.
Christians, Persian, 14, 30; break away from Rome, 14; persecuted, 14, 17.
Church Missionary Society, 26, 58, 59, 113; hospitals, 134; schools, 187.
Climate, 21.
Colours, Persian, 43, 44.
Controversy, 148–151.
Converts, Persian, 30, 45, 77, 183, 192, 193.

Cyrus the Great, 11, 12.

Dancing girl, 85.
Dari, 29.
Darius Hystaspes, 11, 12, 27.
Darius, the Mede, 23.
Death and Funeral Rites in Persia, 49–51, 67, 88.
Dervish, 36, 45, 119.
Desert, 19, 21–23, 52; salt, 19, 53; sandy, 19; stony, 56.
Diocletian, 14.
Divorce, 48, 122, 146.
Dodson, Dr. and Mrs., 183.
Dreams, 44–46.
Dress, Persian, 26, 42, 43, 61, 63, 83, 85; Armenian, 63.

Education, 30, 40, 57, 186–188, 192.
Ephesus, Council of, 14.
Etiquette, 42.
Euphrates, 19.
Ezelis, 191.

Famine, 22, 58.
Farash Bāshi, wife of, 103.
Farquhar, Dr., 3.
Fatima, 35.
Fauna of Persia, 21, 22, 52, 53, 56, 155.
Fire-worshippers, *see* Parsis.
Flora of Persia, 20, 21, 24, 44, 51, 54, 156, 181.
Food, 63, 64, 84–86, 90, 100, 111, 125.
Fruit, 21, 24, 156–158.

Gardens, 21, 24, 30.
Greece, 12.
Gypsies, 25, 52.

Hasan, 33, 34, 36.
Hebrew Christians, 193.
Herodotus, 23.
Hinduism, 15.
Hindus, 191.
Hospitals, 26, 133–135, 185, 189.
Hospitality, 27, 158.
Houses, Persian, 46, 47.
Husain, 33, 34, 36.
Husainabad, 73, 81.

Il-Khani, 25.
Ilyats, 25, 26, 29, 90.
Imam, 33, 36, 82.
Imam Jumah, 82, 83, 90, 91, 141.
Indo-European, 27.
Industries, 25.
Irān, *see* Persia.
Isfahan, 18, 26, 42, 45, 59, 70, 93, 112, 114, 115, 118, 133, 134, 147, 153, 185, 187, 188; church of St. Luke, 189; hospital at, 189, 190.
Islam, 17, 32, 33, 37, 40, 185, 190.
Israelite colonies, 11.

Jallal, Princess, 86.
Jews, 11, 191; school of tradition and Talmudic learning, 12; hinder the spread of Christianity in Persia, 13; downtrodden, 30; believers in Bahâism, 39; friendliness of, 74; their feasts, 102; Mary Bird's work among, 150, 151–153; desire for progress, 186.
Julfa, 8, 18, 60, 70, 80, 91, 115, 187.

Kad Khudá, 72, 73, 74.
Kajar dynasty, 18.
Kashan, 103, 104.
Kerbela, 36, 51.
Kerman, 9, 98, 106, 115, 118, 120, 122, 127, 131, 133, 134, 151, 158, 159, 169, 170, 175, 181–183, 186; hospital at, 134, 182, 183, 189; its liberal spirit, 191; Governor of, 99.
Khabis, 155, 159, 181, 182.
Kismet, 42, 46, 55.
Kuhrúd, 104.
Kum, 37, 51.

Lawrence, Lord John, 1, 5.

Madness, 111, 116, 131–133.
Magi, 13, 15.
Magiism, 17.
Marriage customs, 47, 48, 63, 122.
Martyn, Henry, 58, 60.
Mecca, 36, 155.
Medes of Ecbatana, 10, 11.
Media, 11.
Medicine, 110, 111, 119, 126.
Meshed, 36, 184.
Mesopotamia, 11, 12, 13.
Mobeds, 17.
Mogul Tartars, 17.
Mongols, 17.
Mohammedanism and Zoroastrianism, 16, 17, 29; national faith of Persia, 31; theory and practice, 31, 32, 61; degradation of woman, 32, 33; appeal to the emotions, 33–35; fast of Ramazán, 36, 119; pilgrimages to Mecca, 36; trend towards Sufiism, 37; Bahâism, 37–39, 40; differences between, and Christianity, 143, 144.
Monotheism, 11.
Mountains, 19–21, 24, 156, 157.
Muharram, 33, 34.
Muir, Sir William, 1.
Mullās, opposition, of, 70, 71, 74, 76; friendliness of, 95, 115, 120, 138.
Musjid-i-Shah, 71, 187.
Mystic pantheism, 37.

Nadir Shah, 18.
Nāsru'd Din Shah, 89.
National movements, 188.
Nestorians, 13, 14, 30.

Omar Khayām, 17.
Opium, 111, 122, 127–130.
Ormuzd, 15, 16.

Pasargadæ, 12.
Paradise, 21.
Parsis, 15, 16, 29, 39, 98, 191; desire for progress, 186, 187 (*see also* Zoroastrianism).
Parthians, 12, 13, 30.
Persepolis, 12.
Persia, early history, 10–13; religion, 13–18; Arabic rule, 16, 17; rule of the Mogul Tartars, 17, 18; philosophy of, 17, 185; modern Persia, 19–57; geographical description, 19–24; travel, 22–24, 51–57; population, 24–26; nomadic tribes, 25, 52, 53; language, 27; Constitution of 1906, 28; conditions and customs, 41–47, 62, 64, 65; symbol, 41; field for missionary work, 58, 184–194; first Mission, 59; lack of doctors, 109, 110; views on present war, 184, 185; normal condition of, 185; lack of public opinion, ideals, co-operation, trust, 185; "new Persia," 185, 186; need of knowledge, 186; wish for progress, 186; medical work, 188–192; religious needs, 189; attitude towards Christianity, 189; native Church, 77, 191; present trend of eventsin,193.
Persian Gulf, 19, 21, 22.
Persians, character, 27, 28, 50; language, 27; their love of Mary Bird, 60, 69, 77, 94–96, 99, 108; their procrastination, 64; social intercourse with, 64, 82, 83–86; appreciate moral training, 77; ignorance of medicine and surgery, 109, 110; treatment of disease, 111; appreciation of medical work, 133–135; interest in education, 187; converts, 30, 191, 192.

Pilgrimage, 36, 37, 63, 147.
Plains, 20, 21.
Poets and poetry, 21, 27.
Polygamy, 26, 30, 33, 48.
Prayer, 36, 79, 115, 127, 139.
Prayer Book, in Persian, 58.

Qur'ān, the, 28, 33, 61, 106, 144, 149.

Railways, 22.
Ramazán, Month of, 36, 37,119.
Rasm va Kismet, 42.
Rhages, 15.
Rivers, 24, 53, 54.
Roads, 22, 23, 51, 52.
Rome, 13, 14.
Russia, 22, 39, 184.
Ruza Khani, 35, 102.

Sacrifice, 141.
Sadi, 22.
Safar, month of, 33.
Safavi dynasty, 18.
Sanskrit, 27.
Saracens, 17.
Sardis, 23.
Sasanidæ, 12.
Schools: 185, 186, 187.
Seleucidæ, 12.
Shah, The, 28, 42, 67, 89, 140.
Shah Ali, 101.
Shaikhis, 191.
Shapur II., 14.
Shiah Mohammedans, 18, 33–37, 39, 44; *tazieh* or miracle plays, 33, 35.
Shiraz, 21, 37; prince of, 177–179; school at, 187.
Shuster, 23, 25.
Sirj, 182.
Slaves, 49, 84, 85.
Smith, Dr. G., 1.
Stileman, Bishop, 9, 99,106,112.
Stuart Memorial College, 187.
Stuart, Bishop, 115, 189.
Stuart, Dr. Emmeline, 115, 158.
Sufiism, 37, 38.
Sumner, Bp. C. R., 1.
Sumner, Abp. J. B., 1.
Sunnis, 17.
Superstitions, 65.
Syriac, 13.

Tazieh, 33.
Tear bottles, 50.
Teheran, 40, 138, 187, 188, 191.
Titles, 42.
Translations: New Testament, 58; Prayer Book, 58; Bible, 192; "Daily Light," 192.
Travelling, 22–24, 51–57.

Vedism, 15.
Veil, 33, 48, 49, 63.
Village, people, 24, 54, 62, 66, 67, 122, 148, 191; crowds, 126, 127, 137, 153, 154.

Watson, Harriet O. (Mrs. C. R. Bird), 3, 160–164.
Wedding, a Persian, 85, 86.
Weeping Services, 35, 89, 139, 143.
Westlake, Dr. Winifred, 181.
White, Mrs., 154.
Women, Persian, 32, 33, 40, 42, 47–49; ignorance, 64; sufferings, 65–67, 80, 139; love for Mary Bird, 60, 66, 69, 77, 92, 95, 96, 123, 124; influence over the men, 49 69; position, 188.

Xerxes, 12, 19.

Yezd, 9, 29, 35, 42, 54, 55, 115, 118, 127, 151, 169, 175, 187, 188; Hospital at, 133, 189.

Zan-y-javad Agha, 84, 85, 86.
Zend Avesta, the, 15, 30.
Zoroaster or Zardusht, 15, 16.
Zoroastrianism, 13, 17, 29, 41.

27379

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

JAN 27 1992

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 672 506 3